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A COMMENTARY
ON THE
LAW OF CONTRACTS.

BY
FRANCIS WHARTON, LL.D.,
AUTHOR OF TREATISES ON CONFLICT OF LAWS, ON EVIDENCE, ON AGENCY, ON NEGLIGENCE,
AND ON CRIMINAL LAW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

Vol. II., page 21, § 642, 1st line, *for* "distinct," *read* "distinctive."

" " " 4th line, *for* "latter," *read* "former."

" 60, at end of note 1, *add* "See *supra*, § 186."

" 205, at end of note 7, *add* "1033-6."

CONTRACTS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALTERNATIVE PROMISES.

Alternative promises may be at election of either party, § 619.	must notify promisor of his choice, § 621.
Unless otherwise provided, election is with promisor when mode of performance is alternative, § 620.	Election limited by its own terms, § 622.
When election is with promisee, he	Election is final, § 623.
	When one alternative is impossible, the other is imperative, § 624.

§ 619. An alternative promise may be at the election of the promisor or of the promisee. The promisor may reserve to himself to do one of two or more things; or he may agree to do one of two or more things at the election of the promisee. He may say, for instance, "I will sell you one of this row of houses, whichever I choose;" or he may say, "I will sell you one of this row of houses, whichever *you* choose." When the promisor has the choice, then he is chargeable only in case of his refusing to exercise and effectuate the choice, *e. g.*, only in case he refuses to pick out and convey one of the row of houses. He need not, however, make his election until the time when the promise is to be performed;¹ unless when from the nature of the transaction the duty to make a prior notification is to be inferred.²—How far "option" contracts are illegal, as wagers, is already discussed.³—When a note is in

Alternative promises may be at the election either of promisor or promisee.

¹ Townsend v. Wells, 3 Day, 327.

² Aldrich v. Albee, 1 Greenl. 120; Plowman v. Riddle, 7 Ala. 775.

³ *Supra*, §§ 449 *et seq.* The topic in

the text is discussed by Dr. Emil Bernstein, in an essay entitled *Zur Lehre vom alternativen Willen und den alternativen Rechtsgeschäften*, Berlin,

the alternative, as when it is payable in money, or furniture, or other specific articles, the debtor has an election to pay in money or such specific articles; and, as we will see more fully hereafter,¹ after the day of payment has elapsed without payment, the creditor has the right to demand payment in money.²

§ 620. When the election is merely as to the mode of performance, and when it is conditioned on the convenience or capacity of the promisor, then the election is with the promisor; and when an alternative mode of performance is reserved, and the election is not given to the promisee, it ordinarily rests with the promisor.³ Thus, when C. contracted with E. to deliver him "from one to three thousand bushels of potatoes," it was held that C. had the option of delivering any

Unless otherwise provided, election is with promisor when mode of performance is alternative.

1878. He takes up the question of the object of alternative obligations, —whether it is both alternatives or neither, or only the alternative that is ultimately chosen. Two conflicting theories are noticed. By the first, both objects are in view at the time of entering into the obligation, and one of these is liberated by the subsequent action determining the choice. By the other theory, there is no object in view until one is finally elected. According to Bernstein, both objects may be regarded as in the creditor's view, and both within the range of the debtor's duty. This distinction is also taken by Windscheid, see *Kritische Vierteljahrsschrift für Gesetzgebung*, etc., N. S. vol. iv. 310.—"Die sogenannte alternative Obligation" is the title of a treatise by Dr. Gustav Pescatore, published in Marburg, in 1880. Its object is to establish on the basis of the Roman law a solution of this topic. The maxim; *duae res in obligatione, una in solutione*, is declared vague and unsatisfactory. The prevalent view among modern German jurists is, that an alternative is a conditional obliga-

tion; "if I do not do the one thing, I will do the other." This view, which is held by Fitting, Windscheid, Brinz, and Bernstein, is controverted by Pescatore, who admits, however, that obligations with an option reserved to the creditor are conditional. Only those in which the option is reserved to the debtor he holds are alternative.

¹ *Infra*, § 623.

² *Heywood v. Heywood*, 42 Me. 229; *Church v. Peterew*, 2 P. & W. 301; *Trowbridge v. Holcomb*, 4 Oh. St. 38; *Choice v. Moseley*, 1 Bailey, 136; *Plowman v. Riddle*, 7 Ala. 775; *Mitchell v. Gregory*, 1 Bibb, 449; *Shrewsbury v. Buckleys*, 4 Bibb, 260; *Lawrence v. Dougherty*, 5 Yerg. 435; *Miller v. McClain*, 10 Yerg. 245. As to notes payable in goods, see *supra*, § 599.

³ *Layton v. Pearce*, 1 Doug. 16; *Penny v. Porter*, 2 East, 2; *Small v. Quincy*, 4 Greenl. 497; *Appleton v. Chase*, 19 Me. 79; *Morton v. Webb*, 36 Me. 270; *Mayer v. Dwinell*, 29 Vt. 278; *Smith v. Sanborn*, 11 Johns. 59; *State v. Worthington*, 7 Ohio, 171; *Church v. Peterow*, 2 P. & W. 301.

number of bushels he chose between one and three thousand bushels.¹ And, as a general rule, "in case an election be given of two several things, always he that is the first agent, and which ought to do the first act, shall have the election."²

§ 621. When, from the whole agreement, it appears that the promisee is to have his choice between the alternatives, then the election is to be with him.³ In such case the promisee must notify the promisor of his election, if the more stringent of the alternatives be taken, as a condition precedent to charging the promisor.⁴ Thus, where a lease provided that the rent should be paid either quarterly or half-quarterly, it was held that the lessor could not distrain at the end of the half-quarter without giving lessee notice of his intention to take

When election is with promisee, he must notify the promisor of his choice.

¹ *Small v. Quincy*, 4 Greenl. 497. In *Disborough v. Neilson*, 3 John. Cas. 81, C. agreed to deliver to E., by the first of May, from seven hundred to one thousand barrels of meat, at six dollars a barrel, to be paid on delivery. C. delivered seven hundred barrels, and, before the first of May, tendered to E. three hundred additional barrels. These E. refused. It was held that he was bound to pay for the whole one thousand barrels, the delivery of the final three hundred being at C.'s option.

² Co. Lit. 145, a; *South E. R. R. v. R. R.*, 17 Q. B. 485. When a sum is payable to A. or B., A. and B. may sue jointly. *Willoughby v. Willoughby*, 5 N. H. 244; *Osgood v. Pearsons*, 4 Gray, 455; *Walrad v. Petrie*, 4 Wend. 578. That when a promisor is sued on an alternative promise both alternatives must be negatived, see *Richards v. Black*, 6 C. B. 437; *Leigh v. Lillie*, 6 H. & N. 165; *Gilman v. Moore*, 14 Vt. 457; *Plowman v. Riddle*, 7 Ala. 775; that when a party is allowed to pay or make satisfaction in one of two ways, he has a right to the way he may choose, *Layton v. Pearce*, 1 Dougl. 15;

Brookman's Trusts, L. R. 5 Ch. 182; *Tielns v. Hooper*, 5 Ex. 853; *Elkins v. Parkhurst*, 17 Vt. 105. Hence, when money was loaned for the term of six or of nine months, it was held that the borrower, for whose benefit the contract was, had the election as to the time of repayment. *Reed v. Kilburn Soc.*, L. R. 10 Q. B. 264. And where goods are sold on a credit of six or nine months, the duration of the credit is at the election of the purchaser. *Price v. Nixon*, 5 Taunt. 338; *Helps v. Winterbottom*, 2 B. & Ad. 436, cited *Leake*, 2d ed. 677; see *Middlesex v. Thomas*, 5 C. E. Green, 39; *Burkhalter v. Bank*, 42 N. Y. 538; *Archibald v. Argall*, 53 Ill. 307.

³ *Supra*, § 567; *Leake*, 2d ed. 677; *Fordley's case*, 1 Leon. 68; *Chippendale v. Thurston*, 4 C. & P. 98; *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 P. & W. 3.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 567 *et seq.*; *Leake*, 2d ed. 678; *Vyse v. Wakefield*, 6 M. & W. 442; *Rippinghall v. Lloyd*, 5 B. & Ad. 742; *Watson v. Walker*, 23 N. H. 471; *Clough v. Hoffman*, 5 Wend. 500; *Topping v. Root*, 5 Cow. 404; and cases cited *supra*, §§ 557, 561.

the half-quarterly alternative.¹ It is otherwise, however, when, from the structure of the agreement, it appears that a notice by the promisee was not intended by the parties.²—As a general rule, when, from the circumstances of the case, injustice will be done to the party unless notice of the election be previously given to him, then such notice should be given.³

§ 622. The election is limited by its own terms.⁴ When the party having the option is bound by the contract to exercise it within a certain period, if he let that period elapse without exercising the option, the right is forfeited.⁵ The same distinction is applicable to place. If the right to perform an alternative at a particular place is not complied with, *e. g.*, where property is to be delivered at a particular place, or money paid, then the election right is forfeited.⁶

§ 623. We have already seen that when an election is to be exercised as to rescission or ratification, such election is final.⁷ The same rule applies when an election is open between alternative conditions. The alternative chosen must be adhered to.⁸ By failure to avail himself of one alternative, in the way limited by the contract, the promisor becomes finally bound to the other.⁹ Thus, where rent

¹ *Mallam v. Arden*, 10 Bing. 299.

² *Townsend v. Wells*, 3 Day, 327; *supra*, § 567.

³ *Plowman v. Riddle*, 17 Ala. 775; *Aldrich v. Albee*, 1 Greenl. 120; *supra*, §§ 567, 571 *et seq.*

⁴ *Heywood v. Heywood*, 42 Me. 229; *Church v. Feterow*, 2 P. & W. 301; *Choice v. Moseley*, 1 Bailey, 136; *Plowman v. Riddle*, 7 Ala. 775.

⁵ *Shearer v. Jewett*, 14 Pick. 232. As to legality of "option," see *supra*, § 453.

⁶ *Stewart v. Donnelly*, 4 Yerg. 177. As to performance in respect to place, see *infra*, §§ 871 *et seq.*

⁷ *Supra*, § 290; *Benj. on Sales*, § 359; *Brown v. Ins. Co.*, 1 E. & E. 853; *Gath v. Lees*, 3 H. & C. 558; *Lynch v. O'Donnell*, 127 Mass. 311.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 679, citing *Brown v. Ins. Co.*, 1 E. & E. 853, in which Lord Campbell, C. J., said: "Where there is an election, given by contract, and the election is made, it is the same as if there had been no election; and the party is absolutely bound to do that which he has elected to do." *S. P.*, *Gath v. Lees*, 3 H. & C. 558; *Heywood v. Heywood*, 42 Me. 229; *Townsend v. Wells*, 3 Day, 327; *McNitt v. Clark*, 7 Johns. 465; *Church v. Feterow*, 2 P. & W. 301; *Choice v. Moseley*, 1 Bailey, 136; *Laurence v. Dougherty*, 5 Yerg. 435; *Miller v. McClain*, 10 Yerg. 245; *Plowman v. Riddle*, 7 Ala. 775; *Collins v. Whigham*, 58 Ala. 438.

⁹ *Stewart v. Donnelly*, 4 Yerg. 177; *Townsend v. Wells*, 3 Day, 327; *McNitt v. Clark*, 7 Johns. 465; *Nesbitt v. Pear*

was reserved by agreement "to be paid quarterly or half-quarterly if required," the landlord, as we have seen, was held to be precluded after taking a series of quarterly payments from the first payment on, from calling for half-quarterly payments.¹

§ 624. When one of two alternatives becomes impossible (as where one of two dates becomes impracticable), then the promisor is bound to perform the other alternative.² When one of the periods has elapsed, then the other becomes obligatory.³ And when a note is payable, at any time before maturity, in specific articles, the election so to pay is terminated by maturity. After that period the payee's right to demand money is absolute.⁴ An important exception to the above rule exists in cases where one of the alternatives is inoperative under the statute of frauds. In such case "it is manifest that of such alternative engagements no action will lie upon that one which, if it stood alone, could be enforced as being clear of the statute of frauds, because the effect would be to enforce the other; namely, by making the violation of it the ground of an action."⁵ "The principle of the rule is that where the contract is entire, no one part being severable from the other, and part of it is within the statute, the other part cannot be enforced. To constitute a cause of action on the agreement it was necessary to aver a breach of both alternatives of the promise, and as under the statute there could be no breach of the promise in respect to the land, there could be no cause of action on the promise in respect to the money."⁶

When one alternative is impossible, the other is imperative.

son, 33 Ala. 668. As to time as a condition see *supra*, § 557; *infra*, §§ 881 et seq.

¹ *Mallan v. Arden*, 10 Bing. 299.

² *Stevens v. Webb*, 7 C. & P. 60; *infra*, § 328.

³ *Choice v. Mosely*, 1 Bailey, 136, and cases cited *supra*, § 328.

⁴ *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 Pen. & W. 63;

supra, § 328; *Church v. Feterow*, 2 Pen. & W. 301.

⁵ *Browne*, Stat. of Frauds, § 152.

Patterson v. Cunningham, 12 Me. 506;

Crawford v. Morrell, 8 Johns. 253;

Van Alstine v. Wimple, 5 Cow. 162;

Goodrich v. Nickols, 2 Root, 498.

⁶ *White, J.*, *Howard v. Brower*, Sup. Ct. Ohio, 1881, 13 Rep. 215; see *supra*, § 328.

CHAPTER XIX.

INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION.

I. INTERPRETATION.

Distinction between construction and interpretation, § 627.

Classification of interpretation, § 628.

Genuineness of text to be first established, § 629.

Terms of art and business to be explained by parol, 630.

Meaning of terms of art or business is for jury; construction of meaning is for court, § 631.

Accepted legal meaning of words to be received, § 632.

Descriptive words are to yield to fixed natural objects, as well as to construction, § 633.

Ciphers and abbreviations may be explained by experts, § 634.

Sense intended at the time must be adopted, § 635.

But not (unless in cases of mutual mistake) to override writing, § 636.

Place in subordination to whose idioms a word is used, to determine meaning, § 637.

In informal documents plain meaning not to be postponed to technical, § 638.

In memoranda and private letters allowance to be made for individual characteristics, § 639.

Nomen generalissimum to be largely defined, § 640.

II. CONSTRUCTION.

Construction determined by laws of logic, § 641.

Unsealed contracts differ only in degree from unwritten, § 642.

Final written contract absorbs preliminary negotiations, § 643.

Writing may be on its face tentative, § 644.

Provisional agreements bind until final are complete, § 645.

But not if there be no proposal and acceptance, § 646.

Construction of contract is for court, § 647.

So of lost documents, § 648.

Rule the same in equity as in law, § 649.

So as to construction of condition, § 650.

Punctuation to be followed, § 651.

Writing distinctively effective compared with print, § 652.

Practice of parties a basis of construction, § 653.

Contract to be construed consistently with good faith and legality, § 654.

Legal meaning, if possible, to be assigned, § 655.

Probable construction taken *bona fide* by agent will be sustained, § 656.

Document to be construed according to intent, § 657.

But supposed intent not to override words, § 658.

Otherwise as to ambiguous terms, § 659.

Customary incidents may be annexed by parol, § 660.

Parol evidence admissible to explain, rectify, and rescind, § 661.

Whole context to be taken into consideration, § 662.

Technical terms to be subordinated to context, § 663.

General terms to yield to special, § 664.	Ambiguities to be construed against party introducing them, § 670.
Correlative documents to be considered together, § 665.	And so as to fraudulent terms, § 671.
Exceptions to be strictly construed, § 666.	In doubt more benignant construction is to be preferred, § 672.
Specific meaning to be brought out, § 667.	When there are two inconsistent clauses, the first prevails, § 673.
Mere surplusage may be stricken out, § 668.	<i>Expressio unius est exclusio alterius</i> , § 674.
But not material qualifications, § 669.	[As to construction of conditions, see <i>supra</i> , §§ 553-8.]

I. INTERPRETATION.

§ 627. BETWEEN interpretation and construction several important points of difference are to be noted. In the first place, the office of interpretation is to determine the meaning of words: that of construction to determine the meaning of the whole document of which these words are the ingredients. A foreign word, or a term of art, for instance, appears in a document; or a term that is illegible or otherwise obscure. The meaning of this word must be determined before the meaning of the document of which the word is part can be collected. The word "usance," to take a case elsewhere noticed, appears in a contract; to attempt to construe the contract until this word is interpreted would be futile, and so with regard to the word "danseuse" in a contract by a theatrical manager. Until this word is interpreted the contract cannot be construed;¹ and the work of interpreting the word is entirely distinct from that of subsequently construing the contract.—Then, secondly, the faculties required for interpretation are very different from those required for construction. The faculties required for interpretation are linguistic; they are such as concern the determining the meaning of words. Of this the simplest illustration is that of the interpreter who is called into court to translate the words of a foreign witness who cannot speak in the vernacular. Or the language of a past era has to be explained; and of this we may take as an illustration a case elsewhere noticed, where, in order to explain the

Distinction between construction and interpretation.

¹ *Infra*, § 630.

word "Gottesdienst," as used in a church contract among Pennsylvania Germans fifty years previously, it was held allowable to show that at that period "divine service" did not include Sunday-schools.¹ Or the object may be to show the sense in which a word is used in a foreign country, or the sense in which it is used by a local custom in our own land; and to show this, extrinsic proof may be received.² For the work of interpretation, therefore, the mind works objectively, the object being to determine critically something outside of its own operations—*e. g.* the meaning of a foreign or ancient word, or of a term of art is to be sought, or the sense in which a word was used by those by whom the document in issue was framed to be explored. On the other hand, the work of construction is mainly logical. The question is—not as to the meaning of particular words, for that is settled before we begin the construction of the document in which these words occur—but, what is the general sense of the document, and to get at this we have to resort to such logical laws as will enable us to draw conclusions which will be both just and consistent. The office, therefore, of interpretation is analytic, that of construction is synthetic; the office of the one is to get at the facts, that of the other to group these facts and determine their meaning; interpretation is exploration, construction is induction. Interpretation goes outside of the text and appeals to extrinsic proof to get at the meaning of the text; construction is limited to criticism of the text as thus discovered.—Another important distinction remains to be noticed: interpretation goes to questions of fact, mainly for the jury; construction to matters of law, mainly for the court.³ Whether a term of art, or a foreign or obsolete word has a particular meaning is for the jury to determine;⁴ when this is determined, then it is for the court to give the general sense of the collocation of words of which the disputed words are part. It is true that the rules of interpretation and of construction are necessarily more or less blended, since in de-

¹ Gass' App., 73 Penn. St. 39; *infra*, § 635.

² *Infra*, §§ 631, 661.

³ See *infra*, §§ 631, 647 *et seq.*

⁴ Wh. on Ev. §§ 493, 939.

termining the meaning of a word we have to appeal sometimes to the context, just as in determining the context we have to throw ourselves into the position of the author when he used the particular words. Nevertheless, the function of determining the meaning of words singly, and the function of determining the effect of those words after they are defined, are as different as are etymology and logic. And they will be so considered in this chapter.¹

§ 628. Interpretation has been classified as (1) literal (*interpretatio restrictiva*), (2) liberal (*interpretatio extensiva*), (3) arbitrary (*interpretatio predestinata*), (4) authoritative (*interpretatio declarativa*).—(1) Literal interpretation is where the letter is closely followed, as where, in interpreting a statute, the term “man” is given an exclusively masculine sense, and where metaphorical terms are construed literally, *e. g.*, the term death by “shedding of blood,” in a statute, being held to mean exclusively death by a wound from which blood flows.² The literal meaning, however, is not to be adopted so as to destroy the meaning.³ Thus the literal meaning of “ten pockets of hops” would make the quantity very small; but evidence is admissible to show that a “pocket” is a hundred-weight, and this meaning, when proved, will be accepted.⁴ (2) Liberal interpretation is the ascription to words of their largest sense. Of this we have an illustration in the interpretation of the words “regulate commerce” in the constitu-

Classifica-
tion of
interpreta-
tion.

¹ Dr. Lieber, *Legal and Political Hermeneutics* (3d edition, 1880, by Hammond), thus expresses the distinction: “Interpretation is the art of finding out the true sense of any form of words; that is, the sense which their author intended to convey; and of enabling others to derive from them the same idea which the author intended to convey.” (p. 11.) “Construction is the drawing of conclusions respecting subjects that lie beyond the direct expression of the text, from elements known from and given in the text—conclusions which are in the

spirit though not within the letter of the text.” (p. 44.) “That branch of science which establishes the principles and rules of interpretation and construction is called *hermeneutics*, from the Greek *ἑρμηνεύω*, to explain, to interpret; and the actual interpretation of them *exegesis*, from the Greek *ἐξήγησις*, explanation. Hermeneutics and exegesis stand in the relation to each other as theory and practice.” (p. 52.)

² See Lieber, *op. cit.* 57.

³ *Infra*, § 654.

⁴ *Spicer v. Cooper*, 1 Q. B. 424.

tion of the United States, so as to include the right to establish inter-state railroads and canals, and to charter a bank. (3) Arbitrary interpretation is that which subordinates interpretation to pre-assumed construction, making the word mean that which the interpreter thinks most consistent with a pre-conceived scheme of his own. In this way construction is erroneously made the basis of interpretation, and not interpretation the material for construction. (4) Authoritative interpretation is that which accepts the meaning of a term as it has been affixed by the state acting either through its legislature or its judiciary. We have illustrations of this in recent statutes in which terms used are specifically defined, and still more numerous illustrations in those judicial rulings by which technical terms—*e. g.*, tenancies “in fee,” “in tail,” “after possibility of issue extinct”—have received a settled juridical meaning. When such a meaning has been accepted as giving the meaning of the terms likely to have been taken by the parties, then it controls. But it does not control when the parties used the term in an independent sense of their own.¹—As distinguished from the above kinds of interpretation is the real—*e. g.*, that which seeks to give to each word the sense in which it was used by the party from whom it emanates.²

¹ See *infra*, §§ 632, 655.

² See Lieber, *ut supra*; Koch, II. 221; Unterholzner, Schuldverhält. tit. Auslegung; Ihering, Aufsätze, 1881; Thöl, Handelsrecht, III. Bd. tit. Auslegung; Vangerow (substantially following the above analysis), I. 46–53, 158; Thüsing, über die Auslegung der Rechtsgeschäfte; Savigny, Syst. des heut. Röm. Rechts, I. § 32; Wächter über Auslegung der unter abwesenden geschlossenen Verträge; Thibaut, Theorie der logischen Auslegung; Zachariä, versuch einer allgemeinen Hermen.

Dr. Lieber (Hermeneutics, 108) gives the following as “the elementary principles of interpretation”:—

“1. A sentence, or form of words, can have but one true meaning.

“2. There can be no sound interpretation without good faith and common sense.

“3. Words are, therefore, to be taken as the utterer probably meant them to be taken. In doubtful cases, therefore, we take the customary signification rather than the grammatical or classical; the technical rather than the etymological—*verba artis ex arte*; tropes as tropes. In general, the words are taken in that meaning which agrees most with the character of both the text and the utterer.

“4. The particular and inferior cannot defeat the general and superior.

“5. The exception is founded upon the superior.

“6. That which is probable, fair,

§ 629. The first office of interpretation is to determine the genuineness of the text.¹ To establish or disprove this experts may be called;² and ancient history may be appealed to to establish or to explain anachronisms.³ When a writing is offered in evidence in which a spurious word is alleged to have been interpolated, it is admissible to apply chemical and microscopic,⁴ as well as circumjacent tests;⁵ and to show the falsity of the alleged interpolation.⁶ And so, *a fortiori*, when a whole document is alleged to have been forged.⁷

Genuine-
ness of text
to be first
established.

§ 630. Terms of art, also, having a distinctive meaning among specialists, may be explained by specialists.⁸ Evidence, for instance, is admissible to show the meaning of "zinc" and of "franklinite," when used in a mining deed;⁹ and of "danseuses" when used in a theatrical agreement.¹⁰ Terms of business, also, will be governed by the sense they have received in business usage.¹¹ Mercantile terms are to be construed according to the custom of merchants;¹² and these terms, when local and distinctive, are to be proved as matters of fact to the jury, subject to the opinion of the court as to the construction of the contract after the meaning of the words is thus determined.¹³

Terms of
art and
business to
be ex-
plained by
parol.

and customary is preferable to the improbable, unfair, and unusual.

"7. We follow special rules given by proper authority.

"8. We endeavor to derive assistance from that which is more near before proceeding to that which is less so.

"9. Interpretation is not the object, but a means; hence superior considerations may exist."

The first of the rules I doubt. In view of the limitations (1) of our perceptive powers, (2) of the objects we perceive, and (3) of our modes of expression, we can hardly speak of the meaning of any sentence as being ever more than highly probable.

¹ Lieber, *op. cit.* 72.

² Wh. on Ev. §§ 704, 718, 722, 972.

³ Ibid. § 964.

⁴ Wh. on Cr. Ev. § 848.

⁵ Ibid. § 849.

⁶ Ibid. § 850.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wh. on Ev. §§ 435, 946; *Pollen v. Le Roy*, 30 N. Y. 549; *Colwell v. Lawrence*, 38 Barb. 643; *Collender v. Dinsmore*, 55 N. Y. 200.

⁹ *New Jersey Zinc Co. v. Franklinite Co.*, 15 N. J. Eq. 418.

¹⁰ *Baron v. Placide*, 7 La. An. 229.

¹¹ See other cases in Wh. on Ev. §§ 961 *a*, 962-8.

¹² *Chitty on Con.* 11th Am. ed. 116; *Gibson v. Young*, 8 Taunt. 254.

¹³ Ibid.; *Hutchinson v. Bowman*, 5 M. & W. 535; *Barnard v. Kellogg*, 10 Wall. 383; *Worcester Med. Inst. v. Harding*, 11 Cush. 289; *Rice v. Cod-*

§ 631. When it is necessary to take testimony to determine the meaning of a term of art or business, the meaning of the term is for the jury; when this meaning is ascertained, the construction of the whole document, incorporating this meaning, is for the court.¹ Where, however, there is no dispute as to the meaning of terms, the question of construction is exclusively for the court.² "It is the duty of the court to construe all written instruments, if there are peculiar expressions used which have in particular places or trades a known meaning attached to them; it is for the jury to say what the meaning of these expressions was, but for the court to decide what the meaning of the contract was."³ Hence, as will be hereafter more fully seen,⁴ the meaning of words is to be found by the jury as a matter of fact, while the construction of the words thus settled is to be found by the court as a matter of law.⁵

Meaning of
terms of art
or business
is for jury;
construc-
tion of
meaning is
for court.

man, 1 Allen, 377; Luce v. Ins. Co., 105 Mass. 297; Schnitzer v. Print Works, 114 Mass. 123; Page v. Cole, 120 Mass. 37; Wayne v. St. Pike, 16 Ohio, 421; and cases cited Wh. on Ev. § 961.

Windscheid (§ 84) states that the fundamental rule of interpretation is the bringing out the sense in which the word to be interpreted was used; and that for this purpose, not only the usage of the place and time of writing, but the idiosyncrasies of the writer, are to be taken into consideration. To this are cited L. 50, § 3, D. de leg. 10, 30; L. 65, § 17; L. 69, § D. de leg. III. 32; L. 18, § 3, D. de instr. 33, 7; L. 34, D. de R. I. 50, 17.

¹ Neilson v. Harford, 8 M. & W. 806; Ford v. Beech, 11 Q. B. 852; Simpson v. Margitson, 11 Q. B. 32; Hodgson v. Davies, 2 Camp. 530; Barnard v. Kellogg, 10 Wall. 383; Stagg v. Ins. Co., 10 Wall. 589; May v. Sloan, 101 U. S. 231; Nash v. Drisco, 51 Me. 417; Pierce v. State, 13 N. H. 536; Wason

v. Rowe, 16 Vt. 525; Eaton v. Smith, 20 Pick. 150; Glass Co. v. Morey, 108 Mass. 570; School Dist. v. Lynch, 33 Conn. 330; Bradley v. Wheeler, 44 N. Y. 496; Edwards v. Goldsmith, 16 Penn. St. 45; Evans v. Waln, 71 Penn. St. 69; Brown v. Hatton, 9 Ired. 319; Paris, etc. R. R. v. Henderson, 89 Ill. 86; State v. Hastings, 24 Minn. 78.

² *Supra*, § 647; Wh. on Ev. § 966; Smith v. Margitson, 11 Q. B. 852.

³ Parke, J., Hutchinson v. Bowker, 5 M. & W. 535. See to same effect Eaton v. Smith, 20 Pick. 150; Short v. Woodward, 13 Gray, 86.

⁴ *Infra*, § 647.

⁵ In McKenzie v. Sykes, Sup. Ct. Mich. 1882 (13 Rep. 400), we have the following from Cooley, J.: "It is for the court to interpret the written contracts of parties; for when they have assented to definite terms and stipulations and incorporated them in formal documents, the meaning of these it is supposed can always be discovered on inspection; nothing which is within

§ 632. The last qualification cannot be overlooked without prejudicing the first. Parties familiar with business are apt to use terms in the sense in which these terms have been construed by the local courts. Hence, when a word has attached to it by such courts a settled technical meaning, parties are to be supposed to use that word with the same meaning.¹ Thus, in a lease, the words "demise" and "let" import a covenant in law for title and for quiet enjoyment during the term.² And the word "ton," in a contract for the sale of iron, will be interpreted as the statutory ton.³ But the legal meaning, no matter how settled, must yield to the sense in which the term is used by the parties.⁴ "The best construction is that which is made by viewing the subject of the contract as the mass of mankind would view it; for it may be safely assumed that such was the aspect in which the parties themselves viewed it."⁵ The true meaning is to override any arbitrary technical meaning;⁶ and the popular meaning is to override the technical meaning when the parties used the word in the popular sense.⁷ This, as we will hereafter see, is eminently the case with informal documents, emanating from business men, in which they must be supposed to have used terms in their common business sense.⁸

Accepted
legal mean-
ing of
words to be
received.

the purview of the contract is left in doubt, and there is, of course, nothing to submit to the jury. *Thompson v. Richards*, 14 Mich. 172. But where the terms of a negotiation are left to oral proofs, the question what the parties said and did, and what they intended should be understood thereby, is single, and cannot be separated so as to refer one part to the jury and another part to the judge; but in its entirety the question is one of fact. *Strong v. Saunders*, 15 Mich. 339; *Maas v. White*, 37 ib. 126; *Estate of Young*, 39 ib. 429; *Eagle v. Campbell*, 42 ib. 565."

¹ *Hart v. Hammett*, 18 Vt. 127; *Clark v. Pinney*, 7 Cow. 681; *Ellmaker v. Ellmaker*, 4 Watts, 89.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 236; *Line v. Stephenson*, 5 Bing. N. C. 183; 7 Scott, 69; *Mostyn v. Coal Co.*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 145.

³ *Evans v. Myers*, 25 Penn. St. 114.

⁴ *Infra*, § 638; *Browning v. Wright*, 2 B. & P. 24; *Biddlecomb v. Bond*, 4 A. & E. 322.

⁵ *Schuyl. Nav. Co. v. Moore*, 2 Whart. 491.

⁶ *James, L. J.*, *Greenwood v. Greenwood*, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 956.

⁷ *Mallan v. May*, 13 M. & W. 51; *Robertson v. French*, 4 East, 130; *Stanley v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 3 Ex. 71; *Schuylkill Nav. Co. v. Moore*, 2 Whart. 491.

⁸ *Infra*, § 638.

§ 633. If there is a variance between descriptive averments in a deed, and natural objects referred to as monuments, then the latter, if of a fixed and permanent character, are to prevail. It is not improbable that the surveyor, from whose notes the deed is made up, may have made a mistake in his reckoning. But it is very improbable that he should have made a mistake in referring to any conspicuous permanent natural monuments.¹ “It is more likely that men may commit an error in courses, or distances, or admeasurements, or in reference to ideal lines, such as those of surveys, than in monuments, and fixed and stationary objects, visible on the very land; and that in purchases and sales and bounties, the latter, as the best ordinary means of information, as well as of exclusive possession, are uppermost in their minds, and regulate their acts, and intentions. Hence, a known spring, referred to as the corner of a boundary line, has always been deemed a more certain reference, in the understanding of the parties, than the ideal line of a survey of the land of another person, supposed to terminate at the same place.”² It is true that boundary lines, when settled by a deed, and when capable of consistent explanation, cannot be varied by parol.³ But when stakes, stones, or other signs are referred to, then their position may be determined by extrinsic proof, and, when they are of a permanent character, they are to be regarded, unless mistake be shown, as the final arbiters.⁴ So parol evidence is admissible to show the changes in monuments and stakes.⁵—It should be added that when, from the whole tenor of the document, it appears that the name of a person or of a thing is given in a particular sentence erroneously, it may be corrected by the con-

¹ *Cleaveland v. Smith*, 2 Story, 279.

² Story, J., *ibid.*; see Story on Cont. § 778; citing also, among other cases, *Smith v. Galloway*, 5 B. & Ad. 43; *Newsom v. Pryor*, 7 Wheat. 7; *Machias v. Whitney*, 16 Me. 343; *Boardman v. Reed*, 6 Pet. 328; *Frost v. Spaulding*, 19 Pick. 445.

³ *Linscott v. Fernald*, 5 Greenl. 496; *Liverpool Wharf v. Prescott*, 4 Allen,

22; *Clark v. Baird*, 9 N. Y. 183; *Waugh v. Waugh*, 28 N. Y. 94; *Wynne v. Alexander*, 7 Ired. L. 237.

⁴ *Wing v. Burgiss*, 13 Me. 111; *Gerish v. Towne*, 3 Gray, 82; *Pettit v. Shepherd*, 32 N. Y. 97; *Reed v. Shenck*, 8 Dev. L. 65; *Colton v. Seavey*, 22 Cal. 496.

⁵ *Robinson v. Kine*, 70 N. Y. 147.

text.¹—But merely descriptive words and recitals are not to be permitted to control the general sense of the contract.²

§ 634. Cyphers, short-hand expressions, abbreviations, and obscurities caused by the use of obsolete words, or by the wearing away of the paper, may be explained by experts, subject to the revision of their testimony by court and jury.³ Informal memoranda may also be explained by parol, when they are used as short-hand and elliptical signs of a meaning understood between the parties.⁴ This is necessarily the case with telegrams, which are sometimes in cypher, and are almost invariably compressed into a few salient words.⁵

Cyphers and abbreviations may be explained by experts.

§ 635. We have no right, in construing an ancient document, containing words whose meaning time has changed, to give such words a meaning which, though correct now, would not have been correct at the time of their selection by the parties.⁶—“Every grant shall be expounded as the intent was at the time of the grant; as if I grant an annuity to J. S. until he be promoted to a competent benefice, and at the time of the grant he was but a mean person, and afterwards is made an archdeacon, yet if I offer him a competent benefice, according to his estate at the time of the grant, the annuity doth cease.”⁷—An illustration already noticed is to be found in a Pennsylvania case, in 1873, in which the question rose whether the term “Gottesdienst,” used in a contract made fifty years previously between two churches, included a Sunday school. The contract was

The sense intended at the time must be adopted.

¹ *Infra*, § 662.

² *Jackson v. Farlow*, 75 Ind. 123; *Hall v. Williams*, 13 Minn. 260; *Shaffer v. Mining Co.*, 4 Cal. 294.

³ Wh. on Ev. §§ 939, 972; *Kell v. Charmer*, 23 Beav. 195; *Sweet v. Lee*, 3 M. & G. 452; *Daintree v. Hutchinson*, 10 M. & W. 87; *Fenderson v. Owen*, 54 Me. 372; *Stone v. Hubbard*, 7 Cush. 565; *Hite v. State*, 9 Yerg. 357. As to blanks, see *supra*, § 204.

⁴ Wh. on Ev. § 926; *Eden v. Blake*, 13 M. & W. 614; *Lochett v. Nicklin*, 2

Ex. R. 93; *Amonett v. Montague*, 63 Mo. 201.

⁵ *Beach v. R. R.*, 37 N. Y. 457.

⁶ *Hutchinson v. Bowker*, 5 M. & W. 535; *Smith v. Wilson*, 3 B. & Ad. 728; *Rawlins v. Jenkins*, 4 Q. B. 49; *Millard v. Bailey*, L. R. 1 Eq. 382; *Metcalf v. Taylor*, 36 Me. 28; *Adams v. Frothingham*, 3 Mass. 360; *Livingston v. Ten Broeck*, 16 Johns. 23; *Denny v. Manhattan Co.*, 2 Hill, N. Y. 220; *Slater v. Cave*, 3 Oh. St. 80.

⁷ *Wray, C. J.*, Cro. Eliz. 360, cited Story on Cont. § 805.

executed by an Evangelical Lutheran congregation, and a German Reformed congregation, for the purpose of erecting a church edifice, the edifice to be used only for "Gottesdienst." The question was whether this edifice could be used for a Sunday school. The court held it could not, since Sunday schools were not in existence in that neighborhood at the time of the formation of the contract.¹ "It is the duty of courts," so it is said by the court, "to interpret the language of written instruments; but in doing this they always follow the meaning attributed to the terms by those whose custom it is to use them. Therefore, when a contract is capable of two different interpretations, that which the parties themselves have always put upon it, and acted upon, especially as here, for a long series of years, a court will follow, because it is the true intent and meaning of the parties which are to be sought for in the language they use. However right it may be to view the Sunday school as a most useful institution in instructing youth in the knowledge and worship of God, and their duties to mankind, this praiseworthy view cannot change a written contract. . . . These congregations never so understood or acted upon their agreement of union."²—A contract to convey property at a certain place means ordinarily property owned by the promisor at that place *at the time* of the contract.³

§ 636. It is elsewhere seen⁴ that it is not admissible unless in cases where mutual mistake is shown, to prove by parol that a contract has a meaning repugnant to its terms. Latent ambiguities can be cleared by parol; but unless the document is shown clearly and plainly to be in contravention of what the parties at the time meant, or unless one party is clearly and plainly shown to have been defrauded by the other, a meaning cannot to be forced into

But not to
override
writing.

¹ Gass' App. 73 Penn. St. 39.

² See *Littlefield v. Winslow*, 19 Me. 394; *Robinson v. Fisk*, 25 Me. 401; *Philbrook v. Ins. Co.*, 37 Me. 137. In *Hatch v. Douglas*, 48 Conn. 116, it was held that where a party uses a technical term which has a clearly defined meaning in the business to which it relates, and the other party, giving it

that meaning, acts upon it, the former cannot be permitted, to the prejudice of the latter, to say that he used it in a different sense.

³ *Hurley v. Brown*, 98 Mass. 545. As to conflict between intention and words see *supra*, § 174.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 202 *et seq.*; *infra*, §§ 660 *et seq.*

it in opposition to its text. The same rule is applied to the definition of words. A latent obscurity in a word may be explained. But there being no obscurity, and no common mistake, and no fraud, evidence is inadmissible to show that the word was used by one of the parties in a sense peculiar to himself.¹

§ 637. When a contract is drawn at the common domicil of both parties, the law prevailing in such domicil is to determine the interpretation of the contract.² When, however, a contract is entered into in this country by foreigners, with a view of performance in their own country, then the law of the place of performance is to prevail.³ But the law of the place of solemnization does not control when it is not the personal law of the parties, or the law of the place where the contract is to be performed.⁴ The Roman law is to the same effect; the test is the place where *actum est*, or *negotium gestum est*, not where *contractum est*.⁵ Hence, the place in subordination to whose idioms a word is used is to determine the sense of that word.⁶ Thus, under a contract to carry a full and complete cargo of molasses from Trinidad to London, evidence will be received to show that by the usage of the place of loading, which was in contemplation by the parties, a cargo is full and complete if the ship be filled with casks of the standard size, though there are other casks of a smaller size freighted in the same vessel.⁷ London custom, also, is admis-

Place in subordination to whose idioms a word is used is to determine meaning of word.

¹ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1022, 1028.

⁴ Hall v. Costello, 48 N. H. 176.

² Wh. Con. of L. § 434; Story, Con. of L. § 263; Wilcox v. Hunt, 13 Pet. 378; Courtois v. Carpenter, 1 Wash. C. C. 376; Watson v. Brewster, 1 Barr, 381; Allshouse v. Ramsey, 6 Whart. 331; Benners v. Clemens, 58 Penn. St. 24; Balt. & Oh. R. R. v. Glenn, 28 Md. 287; Morris v. Eves, 11 Mart. 730.

⁵ Koch, II. 224; L. 34, D. de reg. jur.; L. 17; L. 3, D. de reg. auct. jud. (42, 5).

⁶ Vallance v. Dewar, 1 Camp. 503; Bottomley v. Forbes, 5 Bing. N. C. 121; Spicer v. Coopey, 1 Q. B. 424; Buckle v. Knoop, L. R. 2 Ex. 125; Eldredge v. Smith, 13 Allen, 140; Fitch v. Carpenter, 43 Barb. 40; Walls v. Bailey, 49 N. Y. 467; Barton v. McKelway, 22 N. J. L. 165.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 960; Stebbins v. Leowolf, 3 Cush. 137; see Howard v. Ins. Co., 109 Mass. 384.

⁷ Cuthbert v. Cumming, 11 Ex. 405.

sible to explain the usage of agents acting in London.¹ Persons, also, living and doing business in a particular community are supposed, when adopting the dialect of that community, to use it in the vernacular sense.² When a contract is entered into by correspondence, then the usage of the place of the writer who first uses the litigated words is decisive unless it appear that he accommodated himself to the usages of some other place.³ Where, however, the term is used in reference to a particular place of performance, then the meaning assigned to it in such place of performance is to prevail.⁴

§ 638. In informal documents, the plain meaning is to prevail.⁵ "Words," so it is said, "are to be construed according to their strict and primary acceptation, unless, from the context of the instrument, they appear to be used in a different sense, or unless in their strict sense they are incapable of being carried into effect."⁶ "We ought to read the words," so it is added, "in their ordinary sense, and not to depart from it, unless it is perfectly clear from the context that a different sense ought to be put on them."⁷ Thus the term "insolvency" in a condition that a contract should terminate on the insolvency of the buyer, is held to mean inability to pay, not

¹ Johnston v. Usborne, 11 A. & E. 549. Dr. Lieber gives as an illustration of local meaning, "femme sage," which in France means, not "wise woman, but midwife." Horace Walpole tells of an Englishman who produced some confusion at a French party, by saying to a lady that he appealed to her as a "femme sage."

² Trimby v. Vignier, 1 Bing. N. C. 151; Clayton v. Gregson, 5 Ad. & El. 302; De la Vega v. Vianna, 1 B. & Ad. 284; Taylor v. Briggs, 2 C. & P. 525; De Wolf v. Johnson, 10 Wheat. 367; Bank U. S. v. Donally, 8 Pet. 368; Wilcox v. Hunt, 13 Pet. 378; Pope v. Nickerson, 3 Story, R. 465; Sheets v. Seldon, 2 Wall. 178; Hall v. Costello,

48 N. H. 176; Coit v. Ins. Co., 7 Johns. 385; Aster v. Ins. Co., 7 Cow. 202; Depaw v. Humphreys, 8 Mart. N. S. 1.

³ Wh. Con. of L. § 435; Power v. Whitmore, 4 M. & S. 141.

⁴ Wh. Con. of L. § 437, and cases there cited; and see Hall v. Costello, 48 N. H. 176.

⁵ Supra, § 632.

⁶ Per cur. Mallan v. May, 13 M. & W. 517.

⁷ Pollock, C. B., Caine v. Horsfall, 1 Ex. 519; adopted in Leake, 2d ed. 222; see Garrard, ex parte, L. R. 5 C. D. 61; Bowes v. Shand, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 455; Mallan v. May, 13 M. & W. 517; Fowell v. Tranter, 3 H. & C. 458.

technically adjudicated insolvency.¹ The word "suspended," also, in an agreement that a right of action should be suspended for a certain time, is construed not as barring suit, but merely as agreeing conditionally for a time not to sue.² "Good-will," also, whatever may be its technical meaning, is to be interpreted in reference to the actual rights possessed by the party conveying.³

§ 639. In construing informal memoranda much greater latitude is allowed in the admission of parol proof for the purpose of explanation, and extrinsic facts of all kinds may be put in evidence for the purpose of explaining phrases which are used as mere short-hand and elliptical expressions.⁴ Under this head fall the memoranda of auctioneers⁵ and brokers⁶ as well as entries consisting merely of initial letters, such as I. O. U.⁷ On the same principle, when a letter or other informal unilateral document is before the court, it is admissible, in order to get at the real meaning, to put in evidence the sense in which the writer was in the habit of using particular words,⁸ as well as to make allowance for the informality and carelessness incident to familiar private correspondence.⁹

In memoranda and private letters allowance is to be made for individual characteristics.

¹ *Parker v. Gossage*, 2 C. M. & R. 617; *Biddlecombe v. Bond*, 4 A. & E. 332.

² *Ford v. Beech*, 11 Q. B. 852.

³ *Warfield v. Booth*, 33 Md. 63. That a conjectural meaning, no matter how plausible, must give way to the obvious practical meaning, see *Great West. R. R. v. Rous*, L. R. 4 H. L. 650.

⁴ Wh. on Ev. § 926.

⁵ *Ibid.* § 922.

⁶ *Ibid.* §§ 75, 968.

⁷ Wh. on Ev. § 1337.

⁸ Wh. on Ev. § 954.

⁹ "The only safe and just rule for the interpretation and construction of private letters, is, that we discard everything which is not a bare statement of fact, or which does not carry along with it irresistible evidence of

truth. Even the statement of facts ought to be given, so as not to require any completion, on the side of the receiver of the letter, such as the letter-writer knew would be added during the perusal by the person addressed. As to everything else, the language of a private letter is so entirely founded upon the relation between its writer and the receiver, their acquaintance with each other's character, use of words, nay, sometimes with the very accent with which the writer is in the habit of pronouncing certain sentiments or words, and upon a knowledge of so many details, which, though unmentioned, serve to give the right meaning to the words, that a letter, destined to remain private, frequently changes its whole character as soon as it is made public, and when a third

§ 640. A *nomen generalissimum*, when used as such, is to be largely interpreted.¹ Thus where a document speaks of "cattle," and does not further specify, or of "machinery," and does not further specify, or of "men," and does not further specify, then "cattle" is to be construed as including all kinds of cattle,² and "machinery" as including all kinds of machinery,³ and "men" as including women and children.⁴ It is otherwise, however, when the document goes on to particularize.⁵ Thus, if the document specifies "horses" and "geldings" it would not include "mares."⁶

Nomen generalissimum to be largely construed.

II. CONSTRUCTION.

§ 641. We have already observed that, while the work of interpretation is mainly devoted to the meaning of words, appealing therefore to the critical faculties, that of construction is mainly devoted to the exposition of the sense of an entire document, appealing to the logical faculties.⁷ The rules, it is true, which are applicable to interpretation are of importance in determining questions of construction, not only because the construction of a document cannot be reached until the interpretation of its component words is settled, but because the rules bearing on interpretation, so far as they are rules of logic, bear more or less closely on construction.⁸ But the work of construction is nevertheless distinct from that of interpretation, requiring

Construction determinable by laws of logic.

person attempts to interpret whatever can be doubtful or ambiguous. The relation between two persons forms a key to their correspondence, for which nothing else can be substituted. There is a private *usus loquendi* between friends, husband and wife, members of a family, etc., which cannot be known to others." Lieber, *Hermeneutics*, 145.

¹ Wh. Cr. Pl. & Pr. §§ 209, 237; M'Cully's Case, 2 Lew. C. C. 272; R. v. Spicer, 1 C. & K. 699; Packard v. Hill, 7 Cow. 434; State v. Tootle, 2 Harring. 541; State v. Dunnevant, 3 Brev. 9; People v. Soto, 49 Cal. 69.

² See cases in Wh. Cr. Pl. & Pr. § 237.

³ R. v. Clegg, 3 Cox C. C. 295.

⁴ See Packard v. Hill, 7 Cow. 434; 5 Wend. 375.

⁵ R. v. Cooke, 2 East P. C. 616; R. v. Douglass, 1 Camp. 212; R. v. Willard, R. & R. 494; Hooker v. State, 4 Ohio, 359; State v. Plunket, 2 Stew. 11; Turley v. State, 3 Humph. 323.

⁶ Hooker v. State, 4 Ohio, 350.

⁷ See *supra*, §§ 627 *et seq.*

⁸ See Railroad Companies v. Schutte, 103 U. S. 118.

the exercise of different faculties, and subjected to different adjudications. These will now be examined.¹

§ 642. At common law, no distinct degree of validity was assigned to a written contract which was not under seal. The difference between a written and an unwritten contract, supposing the latter was unsealed, was a difference solely in degree; and in pleading it was not necessary to aver a contract, when not sealed, to be in writing, this being a mere matter of evidence.² In the old writers, written contracts are spoken of as

At common law, unsealed written contracts differ only in degree from unwritten.

¹ Dr. Lieber gives the following as the leading rules for construction (Hermeneutics, 136-7):—

“1. All principles of interpretation, if at all applicable to construction, are valid for the latter.

“2. The main guide of construction is analogy, or rather, reasoning by parallelism.

“3. The aim and object of an instrument, law, etc., are essential, if distinctly known, in construing them.

“4. So also may be the causes of a law.

“5. No text imposing obligations is understood to demand impossible things.

“6. Privileges, or favors, are to be construed so as to be least injurious to the non-privileged or unfavored.

“7. The more the text partakes of the nature of a compact, or solemn agreement, the closer ought to be its construction.

“8. A text imposing a performance expresses the minimum, if the performance is a sacrifice to the performer; the maximum, if it involves a sacrifice or sufferance on the side of the other party.

“9. The construction ought to harmonize with the substance and general spirit of the text.

“10. The effects which would result from one or the other construction may

guide us in deciding which construction we ought to adopt.

“11. The older a law, or any text containing regulations of our actions, though given long ago, the more extensive the construction must be in certain cases.

“12. Yet nothing contributes more to the substantial protection of individual liberty than a habitually close interpretation and construction.

“13. It is important to ascertain whether words were used in a definite, absolute, and circumscribed meaning, or in a generic, relative, or expansive character.

“14. Let the weak have the benefit of a doubt, without defeating the general object of the law. Let mercy prevail if there be a real doubt.

“15. A consideration of the entire text or discourse is necessary, in order to construe fairly and faithfully.

“16. Above all, be faithful in all construction. Construction is the building up with given elements, not the forcing of extraneous matter into a text.”

That the construction must be reasonable, see *Com. Dig. Agreement, C.*; *Freeland v. Burt*, 1 T. R. 703; *Saward v. Anstey*, 2 Bing. 522; *Robertson v. French*, 4 East, 135.

² *Infra*, § 684; *Leake*, 2d ed. 169; *Seddon v. Senate*, 13 East, 74; *Young v. Austin*, L. R. 4 C. P. 553; *Corkling*

parol; all contracts not under seal, written as well as unwritten, having this title.¹ On the other hand, the word *parol*, when denoting a distinct species of evidence, is used as convertible with oral; and when we speak of *parol* evidence being received to explain a written document, we mean oral evidence.² As is elsewhere seen, secondary evidence of documents is inadmissible, no matter what phase of inferiority constitutes such secondariness;³ the general test, however, not being authority or dignity, but immediateness of relation to the object to which the document refers.⁴ Hence, no primary testimony is rejected because of faintness.⁵—So far as concerns the right to vary a document by *parol*, no distinction is now recognized between sealed and unsealed writings.⁶

§ 643. But when the question arises as to the mode of proving a contract, it is an established rule of evidence that all preliminary negotiations are to be regarded as merged in the writing which the parties have agreed on as the final expression of their views.⁷ That which is likely to have been the more deliberate form of expression, and to have been most maturely weighed by them, will be regarded as their final utterance. It is not so merely because the form selected is written while that rejected is unwritten. Cases sometimes arise in which it may appear that a word was used under mutual mistake, and in which an unwritten word may be substituted on oral proof for a written word.⁸ And cases still more frequently arise in which informal written memoranda are merged in a final unwritten contract.⁹ There is no inexorable rule, there-

v. Massey, L. R. 8 C. P. 395. A specialty, however, is supposed to be of a higher solemnity than an unsealed contract, and when an unsealed contract is succeeded by a specialty on the same subject-matter, the sealed is supposed to absorb the unsealed document. See *infra*, § 643.

¹ *Infra*, § 684.

² *Parol* evidence may be also used, as *Mr. Leake* (Contracts, 2d ed. 170) notices, as convertible with extrinsic

evidence, to which he cites 3 Black. Com. 367; *Taylor on Ev.* § 367.

³ *Wh. on Ev.* § 60.

⁴ *Ib.* § 71.

⁵ *Ib.* § 72.

⁶ *Ib.* §§ 930 *et seq.*; *Canal Co. v. Ray*, 101 U. S. 527.

⁷ That provisional agreements are not to be treated as final, see *supra*, § 5.

⁸ See *supra*, §§ 205 *et seq.*

⁹ *Wh. on Ev.* § 1014; *supra*, § 5.

fore, that, wherever there is oral and written proof of the same transaction, the oral is to be regarded as merged in the written. The rule is simply this, that, when a writing is signed by the parties to a contract, it is presumed, until the contrary be proved, to embody their final determination, absorbing all preliminary negotiations, whether written or unwritten.¹ On the one side, an agreement meant merely to be tentative cannot sustain a suit.² On the other side, it is competent for the parties to convert such tentative agreement into a final contract.³

§ 644. Written words may be put on the margin or in the blanks of a prepared form merely as suggestions for future consideration; and this is often the case with words written with pencil, so that the marks can afterwards be rubbed out. In such cases it is a question of fact whether the words were meant to be permanently binding.⁴ If the agreement was merely tentative, and was not intended by the parties to operate until reduced to form, then it cannot, until so reduced, sustain a suit.⁵

Writing
may be on
its face
tentative.

§ 645. Yet it does not follow that, because the parties intend to embody their determination in a solemn writing, prior provisional agreements entered into by them are without force. On the contrary, such agreements, though consisting of mere memoranda, and meant by the parties to be superseded in future by a document elaborately drawn and engrossed, may bind effectually, if so intended, unless otherwise prescribed by statute, until the document in which it is intended they should be merged is executed.⁶ A lessor is bound by an agreement to lease notwithstanding that this agreement provides that a "proper

Provisional
agreement
may bind
until final
be executed.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 173; Wh. on Ev. § 1014, and cases there cited; Brantom v. Griffiths, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 212; Broughton v. Mitchell, 64 Ala. 210; Blackman v. Dowling, 63 Ala. 304. That on an inchoate and imperfect agreement suit cannot be brought, see *supra*, § 5.

² *Supra*, § 5.

³ Riggins v. R. R., 73 Mo. 598.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 220; Lucas v. James, 7 Hare, 419; Adams *in re*, L. R. 2 Pr. 367.

⁵ *Supra*, § 5; *infra*, § 646.

⁶ Gibbins v. Asylum, 11 Beav. 1; Fowle v. Freeman, 9 Ves. 351; Crossley v. Maycock, L. R. 18 Eq. 180; Thomas v. Dering, 1 Keen, 729; and cases cited *supra*, § 5.

contract" is to be drawn by a solicitor.¹ The directors of a corporation vote to approve an agreement with a contractor, "the said agreement to be engrossed in duplicate, signed, sealed, and delivered," and the vote binds, though no such deed be executed.² A correspondence takes place between two brokers in which a sale is agreed on, the vendor saying, when accepting, "contract in due course;" and the sale is complete, although a contract afterwards forwarded by one party is rejected by the other as not accurately giving the terms agreed on.³

§ 646. But unless it contain an actual proposal and acceptance of one and the same thing, a provisional agreement has no binding force. If the terms are settled and only the form is reserved, then there is a contract, but there is no contract if terms as well as form are reserved for future settlement.⁴ An acceptance, also, if it introduces a condition varying, no matter how slightly from the proposal, which condition is to be embodied in a writing to be afterwards drawn, is inoperative.⁵

§ 647. "The construction of a contract in writing, as of all written instruments, belongs to the court alone, whose duty it is to construe all such instruments as soon as the true meaning of the words in which they are couched, and the surrounding circumstances, if any, have been ascertained as facts; and it is the duty of the

¹ Oxford v. Provand, L. R. 2 P. C. 135.

² Jones v. Victoria Dock Co., L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 314, cited Leake, 2d ed. 175; see *supra*, § 5.

³ Heyworth v. Knight, 17 C. B. N. S. 298; see *supra*, § 5.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 5, 8; Leake, 2d ed. 175; Wood v. Midgeley, 5 D. M. & G. 41; Honeyman v. Marryat, 6 H. L. C. 112; Rossiter v. Miller, L. R. 5 C. D. 648; Winn v. Bull, L. R. 7 C. D. 29; and cases cited *supra*, § 5.

⁵ Crossley v. Maycock, L. R. 18 Eq. 180; *infra*, §§ 2, 8. In Crossley v. Maycock, L. R. 18 Eq. 180, Jessel, M.

R., said: "If there is a simple acceptance of an offer to purchase, accompanied by a statement that the acceptor desires that the arrangement should be put into some more formal terms, the mere reference to such a proposal will not prevent the court from enforcing the final agreement so arrived at. But if the agreement is made subject to certain conditions then specified, or to be specified by the party making it, or by his solicitor, then, until those conditions are accepted, there is no final agreement such as the court will enforce."

jury to take the construction from the court; either absolutely, if there be no words to be construed as words of art or phrases used in commerce, and no surrounding circumstances to be ascertained; or conditionally, when those words or circumstances are necessarily referred to them."¹ And while the meaning of all disputed terms of art or business as to which testimony has to be taken is for the jury, the interpretation of the entire contract, including the terms whose meaning is thus settled, is for the court.² It is true that the functions seem sometimes almost inextricably blended. When a contract is partly written and partly unwritten, the determining what the unwritten words actually are is for the jury, on the whole evidence of the case. Yet, supposing these words to be fixed upon, and a definition as a matter of fact assigned to them, then their meaning as related to the other words of the same contract is to be determined by the court. The blending is, therefore, merely superficial, as the two functions seem readily severed.³ The jury are to determine what the contract is, and what, in case of dispute, is the interpretation of disputed words; the court is to determine what is the construction which these words, with the meaning thus established, are to have.⁴

§ 648. When a writing is lost, and parol proof is given of its contents, the province of determining the meaning of these contents remains with the court to the

So of lost
document.

¹ Per cur. in *Neilson v. Harford*, 8 M. & W. 823; *Leake*, 2d ed. 218; *Di Sora v. Phillips*, 10 H. L. C. 638; see *supra*, § 631; 1 Ch. on Con., 11th Am. ed. 103; *Reuss v. Picksley*, L. R. 1 Ex. 342; *Levy v. Gadsby*, 3 Crauch, 180; *Woodman v. Chesley*, 39 Me. 45; *Randall v. Thornton*, 43 Me. 226; *Nash v. Drisco*, 51 Me. 417; *Drew v. Towle*, 10 Fost. 53; *Pratt v. Langdon*, 12 Allen, 544; *Smith v. Faulkner*, 12 Gray, 251; *Globe Works v. Wright*, 106 Mass. 207; *School District v. Lynch*, 33 Conn. 330; *Jones v. Bunker*, 83 N. C. 324; *Emery v. Owings*, 6 Gill, 191; *Collins v. Banbury*, 5 Ired. 118.

² *Supra*, § 631; *Short v. Woodward*, 13 Gray, 86; *Festerman v. Parker*, 10 Ired. 477; *McAvoy v. Long*, 13 Ill. 147.

³ See *Guptill v. Damon*, 42 Me. 271; *Globe Works v. Wright*, 106 Mass. 216; *Rapp v. Rapp*, 6 Barr, 45; *Edwards v. Goldsmith*, 16 Penn. St. 43.

⁴ *Supra*, § 631; *Moore v. Garwood*, 4 Exch. 681; *Brown v. Orland*, 36 Me. 376; *Globe Works v. Wright*, 106 Mass. 216; *Short v. Woodward*, 13 Gray, 86; *Bomeisler v. Dobson*, 5 Whart. 398; *Hooper v. Webb*, 27 Minn. 485.

same effect as if the written document were restored, reserving, however, to the jury the determination of the question how far, as a matter of fact, the meaning of the lost writing is reproduced.¹

§ 649. The rules of construction, which are adopted in courts of law, are substantially adopted in courts of equity.² There is this important distinction, however, to be observed. The burden is on the *actor*, or the person bringing a suit, to make out his case. When a contract is ambiguous, therefore, then a party seeking to have it specifically performed might have a decree against him, while the other party, if seeking to rescind it, might also fail in making out a case. In other words, unless a case requiring relief is made out, an agreement will not be either enforced or rescinded.³ A court of equity, also, will grant relief, in defiance of the grammatical construction in all cases of bonds with penalties. This, however, is based, not on rules of construction, but on the principle that only what is due is to be paid.

§ 650. Whether a document was meant to be an escrow; whether it was obtained by fraud; whether it was obtained only conditionally; whether it was meant to be a mere project, without binding effect;—these are all questions which parol evidence is admissible to determine.⁴ But as a matter of law, the construction of the document is for the court.⁵ Whether a stipulation is a condition depends upon the intention of the parties;⁶ but in collecting this intention, the whole context is to be examined.⁷—When acts are made reciprocally dependent, a party suing for non-performance must aver readiness to perform, or performance.⁸

§ 651. Although in old manuscripts it was not usual to insert punctuating marks, and although in England it is still not usual to insert such marks in either statutes or deeds, yet when they are used, they will be taken

¹ *Berwick v. Horsfall*, 4 C. B. N. S. 450; *Moore v. Holland*, 39 Me. 307.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 217; *Ch. on Con.* 11th Am. ed. 104; *Scott v. Liverpool*, 3 De G. & J. 334; *Eaton v. Lyon*, 3 Ves. 692.

³ *Infra*, §§ 654 et seq.

⁴ *Wh. on Ev.* §§ 927 et seq.

⁵ See fully *supra*, §§ 553 et seq.; *Leake*, 2d ed. 219.

⁶ *Supra*, § 554.

⁷ *Supra*, § 555.

⁸ *Supra*, § 558.

into account in determining the meaning of the document into which they are introduced.¹ False punctuation, however, may be overridden, when this is requisite to bring out the true sense; and if there be no punctuation, the proper inflections will be supplied by the court.²—Parol proof is admissible to prove the meaning of points.³—But sense is not to be sacrificed to punctuation when used carelessly or ignorantly.⁴

§ 652. Whether, when a document is partly written and partly printed, the writing and the printing stand on the same footing, has been much discussed.⁵ The prevalent opinion is, that as the writing ordinarily constitutes the *differentia* of a case, it is, in a case of conflict, when by so doing the general sense of the document can be maintained, to be regarded as overriding the printed context.⁶ “The written words are the immediate language and words selected by the parties themselves for the expression of their meaning, and the printed words are a general formula, adapted equally to their case and that of all other contracting parties on similar occasions.”⁷ “The language of printed blanks is easily assumed to be appropriate, without careful examination, while the written words more safely and more nearly indicate the intention of the contracting parties.”⁸ It has therefore been held that “the part that is specially put into a written instrument is naturally more in harmony with what the parties are intending than the other, although it must not be used to reject the other, or to make it have no effect.”⁹

Writing
distinctive-
ly effective
as com-
pared with
print.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 221; Gauntlett v. Carter, 17 Beav. 586; Caston v. Brock, 14 S. C. 104.

² See Willis v. Martin, 4 T. R. 65.

³ Graham v. Hamilton, 5 Ired. L. 428.

⁴ White v. Smith, 33 Penn. St. 186; Osborn v. Farwell, 87 Ill. 89.

⁵ See Wh. on Ev. § 925; Wood on Ins. 148; Flanders on Ins. 70; May on Ins. § 184; Magee v. Lavell, L. R. 9 C. P. 113; Gumm v. Tyrie, 6 B. & S. 298.

⁶ Robertson v. French, 4 East, 136;

Young v. Grote, 4 Bing. 253; Nicoll v. Ins. Co., 3 Wood. & M. 529; Hernandez v. Ins. Co., 6 Blatch. 317; Benedict v. Ins. Co., 31 N. Y. 397; Hill v. Miller, 76 N. Y. 32; Clark v. Woodruff, 83 N. Y. 518; People v. Dulaney, 96 Ill. 503.

⁷ Per cur. in Robertson v. French, 4 East, 136.

⁸ Finch, J., Clark v. Woodruff, 83 N. Y. 523.

⁹ Blackburn, J., Joyce v. Ins. Co., L. R. 7 Q. B. 583; Dudgeon v. Pembroke,

§ 653. The practice of parties to a contract, also, may give the basis on which its construction may rest. “Tell me,” says Lord Chancellor Sugden, “what you have done under a deed, and I will tell you what that deed means.”¹ Hence, the acts and declarations of parties, constituting their mode of doing business, is strong evidence of the meaning they assigned to contracts made by them.²

Practice of parties may be a basis for construction.

§ 654. If a contract is open to two probable constructions, one of which would impute fraud or illegal purpose to one of the parties, while the other construction would be free from such taint, the latter construction will be adopted.³ Hence, when there are two conflicting local laws, according to one of which the contract would be inoperative, while according to the other it would be operative, the contract will be held to have been made under the latter law, since it will not be presumed that one party intended to cheat the other by a sham and fraudulent contract.⁴ When by one construction, also, a contract would be void, and by another it would be operative, the latter will be preferred.⁵—“If words have been used of any

Contract to be construed as most consistent with good faith and legality.

L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 284; S. P., *Elkins v. Trans. Co.*, 2 Weekly Notes, 403.

See as sustaining text, *Steinbach v. Ins. Co.*, 54 N. Y. 90; *Niagara Ins. Co. v. DeGroff*, 12 Mich. 124; *Goss v. Ins. Co.*, 18 La. An. 97.

¹ *Atty.-Gen. v. Drummond*, 1 Dr. & W. 353, 366; aff. on app. *Drummond v. Atty.-Gen.*, 2 H. of L. Cas. 837.

² *Weld v. Hornby*, 7 East, 199; *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Cl. & F. 569; *Archer v. Dunn*, 2 W. & S. 327; *Pratt v. Campbell*, 24 Penn. St. 184; *Lehigh Coal Co. v. Harlan*, 27 Penn. St. 429; and other cases cited Wh. on Ev. § 941; and see *infra*, § 709.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 1248; Best's Ev. §§ 346-7; *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Cl. & F. 397; *Moss v. Bainbrigge*, 18 Beav. 478; *Lorillard v. Clyde*, 86 N. Y. 384; *Young v. Edwards*, 72 Penn. St. 267;

Mendal v. Mendal, 28 La. An. 556; *Bumpus v. Tisher*, 26 Tex. 561; and see cases cited *supra*, §§ 337, 462.

⁴ Wh. on Ev. § 1250; Wh. Con. of L. §§ 112, 115, 429, 501; *Hellman's Will in re*, L. R. 2 Eq. 363; *Cromwell v. Sac*, 96 U. S. 51; *Cutler v. Wright*, 22 N. Y. 472; *Kilgore v. Dempsey*, 25 Oh. St. 413; *Kenyon v. Smith*, 24 Ind. 11; *Smith v. Whitaker*, 23 Ill. 367; *Talbott v. Trans. Co.*, 41 Iowa, 249; and cases cited Wh. Con. of L. § 429.

⁵ *Wilkinson v. Gaston*, 9 Q. B. 137; *Russell v. Phillips*, 14 Q. B. 891; *Watson v. Pears*, 2 Camp. 296; *Haigh v. Brooks*, 10 A. & E. 309; *Goldshede v. Swan*, 1 Ex. 154; *Richards v. Bluck*, 6 C. B. 441; *Atkyns v. Horde*, 1 Binn. 106; *Simpson v. Vaughan*, 2 Atk. 32; *Lewis v. Davidson*, 4 M. & W. 654; *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Cl. & F. 397; *Ire-*

ambiguity," said Lord Cairns, in a celebrated case, "or the object of which may be open to any doubt, that construction must, according to the well-known rules of law, be given, which will make the contract a legitimate and valid one, and not that construction by which the contract will be destroyed."¹ —"We are not allowed," said Adams, C. J., in the supreme court of Iowa, in 1881, "to so construe a contract as to deprive it of all force, if it is susceptible of any other reasonable construction."² In construing a consideration, also, the courts, when consistent with legal rules, will give it the meaning most conducive to good faith.³

§ 655. Hence, when a contract has a primary meaning, which is ineffectual, from want of some technical requisite, and a secondary meaning, virtually to the same effect, which has no technical obstacle in its way, the latter meaning will be adopted by the courts.⁴ Thus a deed of bargain and sale, which is inoperative in consequence of failure to enrol, will be construed as a grant of its reversion.⁵ A conveyance, inoperative as a conveyance in fee, also, may be made effective as a declaration of trust.⁶ Equity, also, will relieve when fraud, after a *bona fide* agreement, is employed

Legal
meaning,
if possible,
will be
assigned.

land v. Livingston, L. R. 5 H. L. 395; Hamaker v. Eberley, 2 Binn. 509; Marsh v. Whitmore, 21 Wall. 178; Payne v. Wilson, 17 B. & C. 423; Patrick v. Grant, 14 Me. 233; Thrall v. Newall, 19 Vt. 202; Mech. Bk. v. Merch. Bk., 6 Met. 13; Brewer v. Hardy, 22 Pick. 376; Foster v. Rockwell, 104 Mass. 167; Bryan v. Bradley, 16 Conn. 474; Bickford v. Cooper, 41 Penn. St. 142; Cobb v. Fountaine, 3 Rand. 487; Bessent v. Harris, 63 N. C. 572; Long v. Pool, 68 N. C. 479; Evans v. Sanders, 8 Port. 497; Goosey v. Goosey, 48 Miss. 210.

¹ Muir v. Glasgow Bk., cited Wh. on Ev. § 1249.

² Wing v. Glick, Sup. Ct. Iowa, 1881. That the sense is to be that which the promisor apprehended at the time that the promisee received the promise, see *supra*, § 657.

³ Oldershaw v. King, 2 H. & N. 120;

⁴ *Supra*, § 337; Wood v. Leadbitter, 13 M. & W. 845; Shore v. Wilson, 9 Cl. & F. 397; Inglis v. Snug Harbor, 3 Pet. 117; Wallis v. Wallis, 4 Mass. 135; Jackson v. Phillips, 14 Allen, 556; Barrett v. French, 1 Conn. 354; Rogers v. Ins. Co., 9 Wend. 611; Many v. Iron Co., 9 Paige, 188; Evans v. Sanders, 8 Port. 497; Riley v. Vanhouten, 4 How. (Miss.) 428; as to *cy pres* see Bisph. Eq. §§ 126 *et seq.*; as to usury see *supra*, § 462.

⁵ Smith v. Frederick, 1 Russ. 174; Lynch v. Livingston, 6 N. Y. 422.

⁶ See Price v. Dyer, 17 Ves. 356; Sprigg v. Bank, 14 Pet. 201, and other cases cited Wh. on Ev. § 1031.

to prevent the execution of the agreement in conformity with the statute of frauds.¹

§ 656. Another important rule of construction is “that when a principal gives an order to an agent in such uncertain terms as to be susceptible of two different meanings, and the agent *bona fide* adopts one of them and acts upon it, it is not competent to the principal to repudiate the act as unauthorized, because he meant it to be read in the other sense, of which it is equally capable.”²

Probable
construc-
tion taken
bona fide by
agent will
be sus-
tained.

§ 657. As in a contract a concurrence of minds to one and the same thing is necessary, it is essential, in construing a written contract, to determine what was the thing as to which the parties concurred.³

Document
to be con-
strued so as
to bring out
intent.

The real meaning must, therefore, be sought under the formal; the intent must be gathered from the words.—And as no contracts are, both in words and surroundings, precisely the same, each contract is to be determined on its own specific conditions, subject to such general rules of interpretation as the parties may be presumed to have themselves recognized in selecting the words they used.⁴ To aid in understanding, in all cases of latent obscurity, what was the interpretation of the parties, extrinsic facts may be put in

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 911. When the intention can in no other way be executed, provisions and conditions will be construed as covenants; Huff v. Nickerson, 27 Me. 106; and exceptions in a lease have been construed to be a grant of a right. 2 Parsons, 54, citing, Wickham v. Hawker, 7 M. & W. 63.

² Blackburn, J., Ireland v. Livingston, L. R. 5 H. L. 395; adopted and approved in Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. 576; De Tastett v. Crousset, 2 Wash. C. C. 132; Loraine v. Cartwright, 3 Wash. C. C. 151; Courcier v. Ritter, 4 Wash. C. C. 551.

³ See *supra*, §§ 3, 4.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 827–8; Aguilar v. Rodgers, 7 T. R. 423; Doe v. Worsley, 1 Camp.

20; Shore v. Wilson, 9 C. & F. 355; McConnel v. Murphey, L. R. 5 P. C. 219; Aspden v. Seddon, L. R. 10 Ch. 377; Southwell v. Bowditch, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 377; Lawrence v. McCalmont, 2 How. U. S. 449; Bell v. Bruen, 1 How. U. S. 426; Nash v. Towne, 5 Wall. 689; Robinson v. Fiske, 25 Me. 401; Gunnison v. Bancroft, 11 Vt. 493; Hopkins v. Young, 11 Mass. 202; Quackenboss v. Lansing, 6 Johns. 49; Wilson v. Troup, 2 Cow. 195; Clark v. Woodruff, 83 N. Y. 518; Strohecker v. Bank, 6 Barr, 41; Reed v. Lewis, 74 Ind. 433; Spencer v. Millisack, 52 Iowa, 31; Balch v. Ashton, 54 Iowa, 123; Anderson v. Holmes, 14 S. C. 162.

evidence.¹ Thus the word “and” will be construed as if it were “or” when necessary to make out the sense;² though not when either reading will be consistent with an intelligent construction.³—The test, as has been well observed by Dr. Paley, as adopted by Mr. Chitty,⁴ “is not the sense in which the promisor actually intended it, . . . because at that rate, you might excite expectations which you never meant, nor would be obliged to satisfy. Much less is it the sense in which the promisee actually received the promise; for, according to that rule, you might be drawn into engagements you never designed to undertake. It must, therefore, be in the sense (for there is none other remaining), in which the promisor believed that the promisee accepted the promise.”⁵ Chancellor Kent speaks substantially to the same effect:—“The true principle of sound ethics is to give the contract the sense in which the person making the promise believes the other party to have accepted it.” And he adds, that “the modern and more reasonable practice is to give the language its just sense, and to search for the precise meaning, and one requisite to give due and fair effect to the contract, without adopting the rule of a rigid or an indulgent construction.”⁶ In this view, promises understood by both parties to be in jest are inoperative.⁷ The Roman law takes the same position. “In conventionibus contrahentium voluntatem potius quam verba spectari placuit. Cum igitur ea lege fundum vestigalem municipes locaverint, ut ad heredem ejus qui suscepit pertineret, jus heredum ad legatarium quoque transferri potuit.”⁸ “Cum . . . manifestissimus est sensus testatoris, verborum interpretatio nusquam tantum valeat, ut melior sensu existat.”⁹

¹ *Supra*, § 630; *infra*, §§ 661, 827–8; N. Y. 505; *supra*, § 654; and as taking Wh. on Ev. §§ 920 *et seq.*; *Ricker v. Fairbanks*, 40 Me. 43. the same view, see remarks of Blackburn, J., *infra*, § 670.

² *Maynard v. Wright*, 26 Beav. 285.

⁵ 2 Kent, Com. 557.

³ *Secombe v. Edwards*, 28 Beav. 440.

⁷ *Supra*, § 175.

⁸ L. 219, D. de V. S. 50–16.

⁴ Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 104.

⁹ L. 3, C. de lib. pract. (6. 28). See

⁵ This passage is adopted by Bronson, J., in *Potter v. Ins. Co.*, 5 Hill, 147; and, also, in *White v. Hoyt*, 73

generally, Ihering, *Jahr. f. Dogm.* IV. p. 72. That a contract must have a definite meaning, see *supra*, § 3.

§ 658. When, however, the words of a contract have a clear and consistent meaning, and when no mistake or fraud is set up, the intention of the parties cannot be proved for the purpose of overriding this meaning. To intention expressed solemnly in a contract, intention proved orally is to yield in all cases in which fraud or mistake is not established. Many persons are chary and intentionally enigmatical in expressing their real intentions. Others like to hint at tentative schemes which they have no fixed purpose of realizing; others like to mystify, sometimes from policy, sometimes from habit, sometimes from cynicism. Then, again, my intention a moment ago, and that which I declared to be my intention, may not be my intention now. The mind changes rapidly; caprice, or a new though sudden light, may bring about a real and instant change of my purposes. Or, supposing my mind remains unchanged, to permit my private intention to overrule the natural and obvious meaning of my written engagement, would be to give to secret mental reservations an ascendancy destructive of fair business dealing. And, even supposing there be no such taint, to permit the treacherous medium of memory as to conversation to supersede the more exact and more loyal medium of a written statement, is to subordinate the more trustworthy to the less trustworthy mode of proof.¹

§ 659. But when a description in a document is equally applicable to two or more objects, the declaration of the author may be received to explain to which of these objects the description refers. The subject matter of a contract may be shown by parol evi-

¹ *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Cl. & F. 525; *Kirk v. Hartmann*, 63 Penn. St. 97; *Peel in re*, L. R. 2 P. & D. 46; *Great McClellan v. Hall*, 33 Md. 293; *W. R. R. v. Rous*, L. R. 4 H. L. 650; *Woodell v. Greaser*, 51 Ind. 539; *McHunt v. Rousmanier*, 8 Wheat. 174; *Cormick v. Huse*, 66 Ill. 315; *Hartford Ins. Co. v. Webster*, 69 Ill. 392; *Pilmer v. Bank*, 16 Iowa, 321; *Turner v. Wilcox*, 54 Ga. 593; *Sanford v. Howard*, 29 Ala. 684; and other cases cited Wh. on Ev. § 937. As to conflict between thought and word, see *supra*, § 174.

dence of the surrounding circumstances.”¹ The object is, not to create a new agreement for the parties, but to determine to what extrinsic facts the agreement made by them relates. It should be remembered, however, that while a “latent” or objective ambiguity, *i. e.* doubt as to which of several objects the parties mean, may be cleared by extrinsic testimony, it is otherwise with “patent” or subjective ambiguity, *i. e.* doubt as to whether the parties had any specific meaning. The courts may declare to what objects certain terms relate. But they cannot introduce objects the parties did not intend. In other words, the courts may determine to what thing a contract relates, but by the parties alone can the contract be made.²—The provisions of the Roman law are to the same effect. “Cum in verbis nulla ambiguitas est, non debet admitti voluntas questio.”³ “Non aliter a significatione verborum recedi oportet, quam cum manifestum est, aliud sensisse testatorem.”⁴—At the same time when a word is left out by mistake, it will be inserted if the context supplies the material.⁵

§ 660. As is elsewhere more fully shown,⁶ it may be proved by parol that the parties to a contract have agreed to collaterally extend it in a mode not inconsistent with its written terms, and that what may be thus done by direct agreement may be done indirectly by force of usage to which the parties may be supposed to have acceded.

Customary incidents may be annexed by parol.

§ 661. When a contract consists of mere memoranda, and though intended to be final, is rather to be regarded as a short-hand statement of the intention of the parties than as an exact expression of that intention, it may be helped out by parol proof.⁷ The mere fact that in itself it is incomplete does not make it inoperative.⁸ This is the case even under the statute of

Parol evidence admissible to explain, rectify, and rescind.

¹ Bradley, J., *Peck v. U. S.*, 102 U. S. 65; Wh. on Ev. §§ 939 *et seq.*, and cases there cited.

² Wh. on Ev. § 958. As to rectification, see *supra*, § 205.

³ L. 25, § 1, D. de leg. 32.

⁴ L. 69 pr. eod.

⁵ *Coles v. Hulme*, 8 B. & C. 568; El-

liott's case, 2 East P. C. 951; *Ferguson v. Harwood*, 7 Cranch, 414, and cases cited 1 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 107.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. §§ 969, 1026.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 202 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 910.

⁸ See Wh. on Ev. §§ 922 *et seq.*, and see *supra*, §§ 5 *et seq.*

frauds. "A general description of the estate, *e. g.* Mr. O.'s house, or my house, or the properties in Cable street, or the house in Newport, or the intended new public house at Putney, or the premises, is sufficient, if parol evidence can be produced to show what property was intended."¹ Such evidence, however, is admissible to explain, not (unless mutual mistake be set up) to contradict the terms of the document.² If mutual mistake be alleged, it is admissible, as we have seen,³ to prove, in cases where no statute is in the way, what was the contract the parties really intended to make, and this rule applies to contracts under seal as well as to other contracts.⁴ But the evidence of mutual mistake must be strong and clear, and that of the contract to be substituted plain. It must always be remembered that the court cannot make a contract for the parties. This can only be done by themselves.⁵ At the same time, to show what the parties meant, customary incidents may be proved. But a custom, to be admissible in evidence, must be brought home to the party against whom it is offered,⁶ nor can it make a contract which the parties did not make. Its only office is to bring out what was meant.⁷ Words, also, cannot, as a mode of construction, be interpolated. If a concurrent mistake has been made, correction is to be effected by process of rectification.⁸ It cannot be done by conjectural emendation by a court.⁹—

¹ Dart, V. & P. 5th ed. 219, adopted by Baggallay, J., in *Shardlow v. Colterell*, L. R. 20 Ch. D. 280; Sugden, V. & P. 14th ed. 134, citing *Bleakley v. Smith*, 11 Sim. 150; *Ogilvie v. Foljambe*, 3 Mer. 53. See *supra*, §§ 630 *et seq.* Other cases are cited *supra*, §§ 202 *et seq.* That a contract is to be viewed in the light of surrounding circumstances, see *Farnsworth v. Boardman*, 131 Mass. 115.

² Wh. on Ev. §§ 922 *et seq.*; *supra*, §§ 202, 205, 601; *Bishop v. White*, 68 Me. 104; *Stewart v. Cambridge*, 125 Mass. 102; *Brown v. Brooks*, 25 Penn. St. 210; *Williamson v. McClure*, 37 Penn. St. 402; *Allison's App.*, 77 Penn.

St. 221. See *Maxwell v. Thompson*, 15 S. C. 612. As to rectification in case of fraud or mistake, see *supra*, §§ 205 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 910.

³ *Supra*, § 205.

⁴ *Canal Co. v. Ray*, 101 U. S. 522; *supra*, § 642.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 205, 601; *infra*, § 910; Wh. on Ev. § 1019; *Canal Co. v. Ray*, 101 U. S. 522; *Smith v. Emerson*, 126 Mass. 169. As to parties, see § 804.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. § 962; *Harris v. Tumbridge*, 83 N. Y. 92.

⁷ *Tilley v. Cook*, 103 U. S. 155.

⁸ See *supra*, §§ 205 *et seq.*

⁹ *Frazier v. Monroe*, 72 Penn. St. 166.

Supposing there be no statutory impediment in the way, it is competent for the parties to a written agreement, at any time before its breach, or before vested rights are acquired under it, to rescind it, or to remodel it by parol; and in the latter case the reciprocal rights of the parties will subsequently be determined by putting together the new parol terms with what remains of the old. To deny this right to reconstruct would involve a *petitio principii*. The agreement, it is alleged, cannot be altered, because it is binding, and it is binding because it cannot be altered. But, as a matter of fact, the binding force of all agreements, no matter how solemn, falls back on parol proof. No document, strictly speaking, proves itself. When a document is said to prove itself, all that is meant is that the court takes judicial notice that it is properly executed, but the court takes this notice because the judges composing the court have learned, originally by parol, that the seal or other verification attached to the document is genuine. There is no document, therefore, whose genuineness is not ultimately to be decided by parol proof; and to assume that a contract before us cannot be affected by parol proof is to assume that it is a binding contract, which is the very point in dispute.¹—It is true that there may be statutory modifications of this rule, and where such modifications are made they are, as far as practicable, to be enforced. Thus under the statute of frauds, requiring that agreements for certain purposes must be in writing, an agreement duly written under the statute cannot be emptied of its contents and new conditions inserted by parol. It would be equivalent to saying that when a statute provides that no goods should pass a custom-house inspection unless the box be sealed by the proper officer, it would be allowable, as soon as a box was sealed, to empty it of one lot of goods and fill it with another. And in addition to the violation of law implied in this, it must be remembered that the object of the statute of frauds is to prevent parol agreements of the particular class, and an agreement would be none the less parol because it is grafted on a written

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 1017. As to discharge of old contract by adoption of new, see *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; 1040.

document of which only its formal parts remain.¹ The degree of the modification is of no consequence; it is enough to preclude parol proof of a change that it creates in some respect a new agreement. Thus parol evidence cannot be received, under the statute of frauds, of a change in a written contract of the mode of delivery;² of an extension of the time of delivery;³ of a waiver of title to part of the land conveyed;⁴ of a change of "quarterly" for "annual" in a written contract for employment on payment of salary.⁵ Nor will parol modifications of a writing duly executed under the statute of frauds be regarded with any more favor by a court of equity than they are by courts of law.⁶—To the rule that a contract good under the statute of frauds cannot be remodelled by parol by the introduction of new terms, an exception is made in equity in cases where the parol agreement has been partially performed. In such case a party accepting and acting on the terms as altered, cannot retain his part of the fruits of the contract without returning their consideration.⁷ But while a statutory contract cannot be changed by parol in a way the statute forbids, it may be rescinded by parol. Like all other contracts, its inception must primarily be established by parol; like all other contracts, it may be rescinded by parol. This is a logical necessity which no statute can preclude, since even the statute itself ultimately must fall back on parol for its proof, and of repeal of the statute parol must be the ultimate proof. A statute may say that a contract is to be proved by a writing, and that the writing is to be proved by the signature, but as the signature has to be proved by parol, so parol may prove that the signatures were cancelled by the parties, or that the parties agreed that the contract should be no longer in force.⁸

¹ Wh. on Ev. §§ 901 *et seq.*; *Noble v. Ward*, L. R. 2 Ex. 135; *Sanderson v. Graves*, L. R. 10 Ex. 234; *Plevins v. Downing*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 220.

² *Moore v. Campbell*, 10 Ex. 323.

³ *Steed v. Dunbar*, 10 A. & E. 57; *Marshall v. Lynn*, 6 M. & W. 109; *Plevins v. Downing*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 220.

⁴ *Goss v. Nugent*, 5 B. & Ad. 58.

⁵ *Giraud v. Richmond*, 2 C. B. 835.

⁶ *Leake*, 2d ed. 797; *Snelling v. Thomas*, L. R. 17 Eq. 303.

⁷ Wh. on Ev. § 909.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 799; Wh. on Ev. § 909; *Price v. Dyer*, 17 Ves. 363.

§ 662. A contract is to be interpreted as a whole, and a meaning involving the consideration of all its stipulations is to be ascertained.¹ “It is a true rule of construction that the sense and meaning of the parties in any particular part of an instrument may be collected *ex antecedentis et consequentibus*. Every part of it may be brought into action in order to collect from the whole one uniform and consistent sense, if that may be done.”² Even an isolated clause must be judged by the context, since it is only by the context that the full sense of the clause can be known.³ Hence a memorandum endorsed on the margin of a policy is to be taken into consideration in construing the policy.⁴—It is not essential, in order to take into consideration the whole document, that it should be construed grammati-

Whole context is to be taken into consideration.

¹ *Parkhurst v. Smith*, Willes, 332; *Browning v. Wright*, 2 Bos. & Pul. 13; *Barton v. Fitzgerald*, 15 East, 541; *Nind v. Marshall*, 1 Br. & B. 319; *Sicklemore v. Thistleton*, 6 M. & S. 12; *Miller v. Travers*, 8 Bing. 244; *Richards v. Bluck*, 6 C. B. 437; *Washburn v. Gould*, 3 Story, 162; *Patrick v. Grant*, 14 Me. 233; *Chase v. Bradley*, 26 Me. 531; *Nettleton v. Billings*, 13 N. H. 446; *Wheelock v. Freeman*, 13 Pick. 167; *Field v. Woodmansey*, 10 Cush. 431; *Pembroke Iron Co. v. Parsons*, 5 Gray, 589; *Talbot v. Heath*, 126 Mass. 139; *Smith v. Emerson*, 126 Mass. 169; *Rolker v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Keyes, 17; *Butterfield v. Cooper*, 6 Cow. 48; *Edelman v. Yeakel*, 27 Penn. St. 26; *Allison's App.*, 77 Penn. St. 221; *Hopkins v. Sanford*, 38 Mich. 611; *Drake v. Vorse*, 52 Iowa, 417; *Sanger v. Dun*, 47 Wis. 615; *Wheeler, etc., v. Gallivan*, 10 Neb. 313; see *Wharton v. Fisher*, 2 S. & R. 178; *Ludwig v. Leonard*, 9 W. & S. 144; *Tate v. Tate*, 75 Va. 522; and see *Money Penny v. Money Penny*, 3 De G. & J. 572, for a full consideration of the rule by Lord Chelmsford. That this is the case in construing conditions, see *supra*, § 555. In *Dodd v. Mitchell*,

77 Ind. 388, it was held that a word plainly omitted from a written contract by inadvertence will always be supplied to accomplish justice by enforcing the intention of the parties. See *supra*, § 210.

² Lord Ellenborough, *Barton v. Fitzgerald*, 15 East, 54.

³ *Stavers v. Curling*, 3 Scott, 740.

⁴ *Bell v. Ins. Co.*, 8 S. & R. 98. In *Hutley v. Marshall*, 46 L. T. N. S. 186, the suit was on the following engagement: “Witness, John Hutley; Rivenhall, Oct. 2, 1860. Three months’ notice I promise to pay Mr. Jonathan Hutley interest 5*l.* per cent. per annum for 500*l.* value received. Dan Marshall, Charles Marshall. [5*s.* stamp.] 500*l.*” It was admitted that, upon the 2d Oct., 500*l.* was advanced by Jonathan Hutley to Dan Marshall, and that Charles Marshall, the defendant, signed as surety for his brother. It was held that this was a good promissory note for 500*l.*; and it was ruled that, where the words in the body of a note are ambiguous, the figures at the bottom of the note and the stamp may be looked at in construing them.

cally. The old system of conveyancing was so cumbrous and complex as to make accurate grammatical arrangement almost impossible; and it would destroy the efficacy of many informal memoranda involving large business interests if ungrammatical clauses were to be rejected. Hence, in order to carry out the intent, the meaning will be collected from the whole document without regard to its grammatical construction.¹ "We regard the rule as well settled, that when the contract or promise is unilateral, and the body of the contract fails, for any reason, to express the agreement between the parties, and a memorandum is made upon the same paper, either upon the margin or at the foot, above or below the signature of the promisor, or endorsed upon the back, and delivered with and as part of the contract, the whole instrument constitutes but one contract, and the memorandum is as much part of it as if written in the body of it."² And when one part of a contract, by a literal construction, would abrogate other parts, such a liberal construction should be adopted as would give effect to the entire document.³

§ 663. An agreement may be collected from the entire document in which it is contained, and requires, Technical terms to be subordinated to context. unless prescribed by statute, no special technical terms to give it effect.⁴ Thus a covenant to plough certain leased premises except a sheep walk, has been held to be a covenant not to plough the sheep walk.⁵ A

¹ See *Clifford v. Watts*, L. R. 5 C. P. 577; *Northumberland v. Errington*, 5 T. R. 526; *Finch's case*, 6 Rep. 39; *Morgan v. Gath*, 3 H. & C. 748; *Staniland v. Hopkins*, 9 M. & W. 178; *Gray v. Clark*, 11 Vt. 583; *Nettleton v. Billings*, 13 N. H. 446; *M'Quiston v. Board*, 88 Penn. St. 29; *Sapp v. Phelps*, 92 Ill. 588; *Greeneville R. R. v. Johnson*, 8 Baxt. 332.

² *Libbey, J., Littlefield v. Coombs*, 71 Me. 111, citing *Tuckerman v. Hartwell*, 3 Me. 147; *Johnson v. Heagan*, 23 Me. 329; *Heywood v. Perrin*, 10 Pick. 228; *Benediot v. Cowden*, 49 N. Y. 396.

³ *Hazleton Co. v. Buck Mountain Co.*, 57 Penn. St. 301.

⁴ *Supra*, § 641; *Pordage v. Cole*, 1 Wms. Saund. 319 b; *Daniels v. Harris*, L. R. 10 C. P. 8; *Lee v. Lee*, L. R. 4 C. D. 175; *Brookes v. Drysdale*, L. R. 3 C. P. D. 52; *Marler v. Tommes*, L. R. 17 Eq. 8; *Jackson v. R. R.*, L. R. 7 C. D. 573. So the Roman law; L. 50; § 3, D. de legat. 1; "item earum, quae praeceunt vel quae sequuntur, summarum scripta sunt spectanda."

⁵ *St. Albans v. Ellis*, 16 East, 352. As to construction of covenants, see *supra*, §§ 555 et seq.

lease with a covenant by the lessee to keep in repair a house, "being previously put in repair," includes a covenant by the lessor to put the house in repair.¹ A covenant to pay a share of the profits of a certain business for three years, to one from whom it was purchased, implies a covenant to remain in the business for three years.² A recital, also, may involve a covenant.³ Thus, a recital in a composition deed, that the debtor had agreed to pay a specified composition to all his creditors, has been held to amount to a covenant on which a creditor could sue.⁴ But words of mere qualification are not to be strained into an agreement.⁵ Thus, where a lease contained a covenant not to assign without the lessor's consent, such "consent not being arbitrarily withheld," this was construed not to imply a covenant by the lessor not to arbitrarily withhold his consent from an assignment.⁶ And no covenant can be implied from a recital if the deed contains an express covenant concerning the subject matter to which it is sought to apply the implied covenant.⁷

§ 664. When large and sweeping terms are used in documents as matters of formal conveyancing, the whole context is to be taken into consideration, and these expressions are to be narrowed to their object. A grantor conveys "all my estate" . . . "in B.," etc. If we take "all my estate" and sever it from the context, his entire property might pass under the deed. But "all my estate" cannot be severed from "in B.," etc. This is an extreme case, but there are innumerable instances in which the same principle is applied.⁸ Thus the condition of a bond

General
terms to
yield to
special.

¹ *Cannock v. Jones*, 3 Ex. 233.

see *Hyde v. Warden*, L. R. 3 Ex. D.

² *M'Intyre v. Belcher*, 14 C. B. N. S. 654; *Marler v. Tommes*, L. R. 17 Ex. 8.

72.

⁷ *Young v. Smith*, L. R. 1 Ex. 180.

³ *Sampson v. Easterby*, 9 B. & C. 505.

⁸ See *Cullen v. Butler*, 5 M. & S. 461; *Ellery v. Ins. Co.*, 8 Pick. 14; *Callen v. Hilty*, 14 Penn. St. 286; *Edelman v. Yeakel*, 27 Penn. St. 26; *Allison's App.*, 77 Penn. St. 221; *Perrin v. Ins. Co.*, 11 Ohio, 147. That general covenants of title yield to special, see *supra*, § 553.

⁴ *Brooks v. Jennings*, L. R. 1 C. P. 476.

⁵ *Wolveridge v. Steward*, 1 C. & M. 657. That an agreement must be definite, see *supra*, § 3.

⁶ *Treloar v. Bigge*, L. R. 9 Ex. 151;

is ordinarily limited by its recitals.¹ General words of conveyance, also, are to be restricted by recitals showing that it was only a limited title that was conveyed.² The words "full power to convey," also, in a recital are to be qualified by the express powers and covenants which follow.³ And, as a general rule, "where a recital is followed by general words, the general words will be limited or qualified by the recital."⁴

§ 665. When several documents are so reciprocally dependent that the meaning of the one cannot be brought out without the introduction of the other, then they may be received together as affording a common basis for construction.⁵—When one of a series of letters cannot be understood without the study of the whole series, then the whole series must be taken into consideration.⁶ But unless closely related and interdependent, such papers are not admissible for the purpose of getting at the meaning of a document under investigation.⁷ It is not necessary, however, that the documents should bear the same date, if they relate to the same subject.⁸ If they so relate they may be read together, as a bond accompanying a mortgage, to explain a mortgage.⁹

§ 666. It is a rule of construction that when there is a general conveyance of a right, with an exception, the right

¹ Pearsall v. Summersett, 4 Taunt. 467; Whitehust v. Boyd, 8 Ala. 375; 593; Hassell v. Long, 2 M. & S. 363; Sewall v. Henry, 9 Ala. 24; Dean v. Bell v. Bruen, 1 How. 169. Lawham, 7 Oregon, 422.

² Rooke v. Kensington, 2 K. & J. 753; Jenner v. Jenner, L. R. 1 Eq. 361; as to releases, see *infra*, § 1037.

³ Browning v. Wright, 2 B. & P. 13.

⁴ Woodruff v. Savings Institution, 34 N. J. Eq. 174.

⁵ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1015, 1103-4; Leake, 2d ed. 229; Coldham v. Showler, 3 C. B. 312; Sawyer v. Hammett, 15 Me. 40; Salmon Falls Man. Co. v. Portsmouth, 46 N. H. 249; Strong v. Barnes, 11 Vt. 221; Makepeace v. Howard Coll., 10 Pick. 298; Cummings v. Antes, 19 Penn. St. 287; Blim v. Torode, 4 Phil. 118; Galena R. R. v. Barrett, 95 Ill.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1103, 1127; Stucky v. Bailey, 1 H. & N. 405; Stevens v. Baird, 9 Cow. 274; Morris v. Salisbury, 48 N. Y. 646; Cordray v. Mordecai, 2 Rich. 518; Casey v. Holmes, 10 Ala. 776; Hill v. Parker, 10 Ill. Ap. 323; Munson v. Osborn, 10 Ill. Ap. 508.

⁷ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1103, 1127; Mann v. Whitbeck, 17 Barb. 388.

⁸ Adams v. Hill, 16 Me. 215; Van Hagen v. Van Rensselaer, 18 Johns. 420; Thompson v. McClenachan, 17 S. & R. 110.

⁹ Kennedy v. Ross, 25 Penn. St. 256.

is to be strictly construed. A grant might be made nugatory by a liberal construction of an exception; and when the object of the conveyance is to pass something substantial only that is to be taken out which the words require.¹ A proviso, also, which annuls a grant will be considered as a nullity.² An explanatory condition or proviso, however, when not repugnant to the context, will not be rejected, but will be regarded as a limitation.³ But, as a general rule, words of exception are to be construed, in cases of doubt, most strongly against the party in whose favor they are introduced.⁴ Conditions in restraint of alienation, also, will be strictly construed, and not permitted to operate unless plainly expressed.⁵

Exceptions and provisions to be strictly construed.

§ 667. "*Verba generalia restringuntur ad habilitatem rei vel personæ.*"—"All words, whether they be in deeds or statutes, or otherwise, if they be general, and not express and precise, shall be restrained unto the fitness of the matter or person."⁶ Thus in a policy of insurance against "restraint of kings, princes, and people of what nation, condition, or quality soever," "people" has been construed to mean ruling powers, and not individual marauders,⁷ and a covenant in a lease for quiet enjoyment has been held to apply to evictions on lawful title, and not to confiscations by government or disturbance by private assailants.⁸ A narrow recital, also, will not control a larger condition which it is the manifest intention of the document to carry into effect.⁹ General words, also, grammatically applicable to only one covenant may be

Specific meaning is to be brought out.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 232; *Taylor v. Liverpool Co.*, L. R. 9 Q. B. 546; *Bathurst v. Stanley*, L. R. 4 C. D. 251.

² *Story, Cont.* § 809; *Bac. Abr. Grants*, L. 1; *Jackson v. Ireland*, 3 Wend. 99.

³ *Ibid.*; *Stewkley v. Butler*, F. Moore, 880.

⁴ *Ch. on Cont.* 11th Am. ed. 137; *Bullen v. Denning*, 5 B. & C. 842; *Donnell v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Sumn. 366; *Jackson v. Lawrence*, 11 Johns. 191; *House v. Palmer*, 9 Ga. 497.

⁵ *Brothers v. McCurdy*, 36 Penn. St. 407.

⁶ *Bacon's Maxims*, Reg. 10; Leake, 2d ed. 227; *Hitchen v. Groom*, 5 C. B. 515; *Gunnsted v. Price*, L. R. 10 Ex. 69; *German v. Chapman*, L. R. 7 C. D. 271; *Hoffman v. Ins. Co.*, 32 N. Y. 405; *Chapin v. Clemitson*, 1 Barb. 311; *Hall v. Bank*, 53 Md. 120.

⁷ *Nesbitt v. Lushington*, 4 T. R. 783.

⁸ *Chanudflower v. Priestley*, Yelv. 30.

⁹ *Sansom v. Bell*, 2 Camp. 39.

construed to extend to other covenants when the sense of the entire document is thus more fully brought out.¹ On the other hand, when a recital is descriptive and explanatory, it may control words of disposal, which, on the face of the document, are meant to be subordinated to the recital.²

§ 668. When an object is adequately described, the contract will not be vitiated by the introduction of minor descriptive details which may be erroneous. *Falsa demonstratio non nocet*.³ The mere accumulation of details, some of them erroneous, will not avoid the instrument when the object of which it treats is adequately identified.⁴—The rule rejecting surplusage has been extended so far as to exclude expressions in a contract which are repugnant to its general sense.⁵

Mere surplusage may be stricken out.

§ 669. Material qualifications, however, cannot be left out of consideration. Whatever is material must be considered as part of the context.⁶

But not material qualifications.

¹ Young v. Raincock, 7 C. B. 340; Browning v. Wright, 2 B. & P. 3.

² Bell v. Brūen, 1 How. 169.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 945.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 229; Wh. on Ev. § 948; Smith v. Galloway, 5 B. & Ad. 43; Slingsby v. Grainger, 7 H. of L. Ca. 282; Llewellyn v. Jersey, 11 M. & W. 183; Doe v. Hubbard, 15 Q. B. 245; McMurry v. Spicer, L. R. 5 Eq. 527; Atkinson v. Cummins, 9 How. 470; Brown v. Huger, 21 How. 305; Esty v. Baker, 19 N. H. 273; Putnam v. Bond, 100 Mass. 58; Drew v. Swift, 46 N. Y. 207; Lodge v. Barnett, 46 Penn. St. 484; Miller v. Cherry, 3 Jones (N. C.) Eq. 29.

⁵ Cleaveland v. Smith, 2 Story, 287.

Ulpian gives an amusing illustration of the principle in the text. He supposes a case in which the sponsor, in replying to the question of the stipulator, instead of saying simply "spondeo," says "arma virumque cano," "spondeo." The jurist decides naturally of this interpolation, "nihilominus valet," because it is to be con-

sidered as "pro-supervacuis," or surplusage. The "arma virumque cano" is obviously introduced by Ulpian as an extreme irrelevancy, the principle being that the intrusion of irrelevant matter does not impair validity. Koch, ii. 225.

In this sense applies the maxim *falsa demonstratio non nocet*; by force of which an erroneous filling in of details does not vitiate a document when it contains adequate general terms setting forth satisfactorily all that is required for exactness. 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 122; Wh. on Ev. § 945; Morrell v. Fisher, 3 Exch. 591; Llewellyn v. Jersey, 11 M. & W. 183; Webber v. Stanley, 10 C. B. N. S. 699; Ridgway v. Bowman, 7 Cush. 268; Drew v. Swift, 46 N. Y. 209; White v. Williams, 48 N. Y. 344; Kreiter v. Bomberger, 82 Penn. St. 59.

⁶ Hotham v. E. I. Co., 1 T. R. 638; Barber v. Wood, L. R. 4 Ch. D. 885; Worthington v. Hylyer, 4 Mass. 196; Kreiter v. Bomberger, 82 Penn. St. 59.

§ 670. When a party introduces an expression having two meanings, one larger, the other more limited, and each equally probable, he cannot, after an acceptance by the other contracting party, set up the narrower construction.¹ Thus, where an insurance company tenders a policy to a party seeking to be insured, and uses in the policy ambiguous words, these words will be held to have the meaning most favorable to the insured, as the presumption is that on this construction he took the policy, and as the company could have avoided the difficulty by being more specific.² “In construing such a document,” said Blackburn, J., “you must bear in mind that they are the words of the party who used them, and if he uses ambiguous words with the intention that the other side may take them to mean one thing, and when the question is to be settled by a court, that court may say they meant something else, the rule applies; and they ought to be construed in that sense in which, looking fairly at them, a prudent man would have understood the words to mean.”³—And, as a general rule, it has also been held that when a stipulation or an exception to a policy of insurance, emanating from the insurers, is capable of two meanings, that meaning is to be adopted which is most favorable to the insured.⁴—A deed-poll, also, ambiguous in its terms, and having two equally probable meanings, will be so construed as to have the meaning most against the

Ambiguities to be construed against the party introducing them.

¹ *Weak v. Kscott*, 9 Price, 595; *Hargreave v. Smee*, 6 Bing. 244; *Browning v. Wright*, 2 B. & P. 22; *Taylor v. St. Helens*, L. R. 6 C. D. 270; *Cutler v. Tufts*, 3 Pick. 272; *Deblois v. Earle*, 7 R. I. 26; *White v. Smith*, 33 Penn. St. 186. See *supra*, § 659. As to releases, see *infra*, § 1037.

² *Fowkes v. Ins. Co.*, 3 B. & S. 917.

³ See to same effect *supra*, § 657.

⁴ *Marvin v. Stone*, 12 Cow. 806; *Rann v. Ins. Co.*, 59 N. Y. 389; *Allen v. Ins. Co.*, 85 N. Y. 473; *West. Ins. Co. v. Cropper*, 32 Penn. St. 351; *Franklin Ins. Co. v. Updegraff*, 43 Penn. St. 350;

Franklin Ins. Co. v. Brock, 57 Penn. St. 74; and see generally to same effect *Wood on Ins.* §§ 141–6; *May on Ins.* §§ 172, 179. That terms emanating from insurer are to be construed in cases of doubt against insurer, see *May on Ins.* §§ 172 *et seq.*; *Fowkes v. Ins. Co.*, 8 B. & S. 917; *Ins. Co. v. Slaughter*, 12 Wall. 404; *Palmer v. Ins. Co.*, 1 Story, 360; *Bartlett v. Ins. Co.*, 46 Me. 500; *Wilson v. Ins. Co.*, 4 R. I. 156; *Reynolds v. Ins. Co.*, 47 N. Y. 597; *North Am. Ins. Co. v. Zaenger*, 63 Ill. 464; *Bowman v. Ins. Co.*, 27 Mo. 152.

grantor.¹ The same principle is extended to all stipulations. Thus, when authority was given to A. to draw on B. "at ten or twelve days," nothing in the letter showing whether "after date" or "after sight" was meant, it was held that A. was entitled to elect the construction most promotive of his interests.² When, however, a contract is concurrently settled by both parties, the rule before us does not apply. In such case neither party can be regarded as distinctively propounding any specific terms.³ So far, however, as concerns stipulations emanating from either party, ambiguous terms are to be construed, in cases of doubt, most strongly against the particular party first making use of the term.⁴ It must also be kept in mind that the rule before us only applies in cases where there are two probable constructions to be given to the contested clause. No construction, in itself improbable, can be adopted by force of

¹ *Beeson v. Patterson*, 36 Penn. St. 24.

"Where a stipulation is capable of two meanings equally consistent with the language employed, that shall be taken which is most against the stipulator, and in favor of the other party." Per cur. in *McConnel v. Murphy*, L. R. 5 P. C. 219; see *Lincoln v. Wilder*, 29 Me. 169; *Cochequo Co. v. Whittier*, 10 N. H. 305; *Jackson v. Blodget*, 16 Johns. 172.

"Where there are several ways in which the contract might be performed, that mode is adopted which is the least profitable to the plaintiff, and the least burthensome to the defendant." Maule, J., *Cockburn v. Alexander*, 6 C. B. 814, quoted Leake, 2d ed. 232; *S. P. Garrison v. U. S.*, 7 Wall. 688; see *Melvin v. Proprietors*, 5 Met. (Mass.) 15.

"It is a well-known rule in the construction of private grants, if the meaning of the words be doubtful, to construe them most strongly against the grantor." Story, J., *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*, 11 Peters,

589; *S. P. Winslow v. Patten*, 36 Me. 369; *Thrall v. Newell*, 19 Vt. 202; *Mills v. Catlin*, 22 Vt. 98; *Melvin v. Proprietors*, 5 Met. (Mass.) 27; and see *Mayer v. Isaac*, 6 M. & W. 612; *Pike v. Munroe*, 36 Me. 309; *supra*, § 654. A guaranty, for instance, is to be construed most strongly against the guarantor, *supra*, § 656; *Stephens v. Pell*, 2 C. & M. 710; *Hargrave v. Smees*, 6 Bing. 244.

² *Barney v. Newcomb*, 9 Cush. 46. In the Roman law the same position is repeatedly affirmed. L. 38, § 18, I. 99 pr. I. § 106—D. de V. O. 45, I.; L. 26, D. de reb. dub. 34.5—Seuff. Arch. III. 301.

³ *Supra*, §§. 641 *et seq.*; *Cardigan v. Armitage*, 2 B. & C. 197; *Brown v. McGrau*, 14 Pet. 480; *Beckwith v. Howard*, 6 R. I. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *Browning v. Wright*, 2 B. & P. 22; *Donnell v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Sumn. 366; *Jackson v. Hudson*, 3 John. 387. This is virtually the distinction of Dr. Paley, *supra*, § 657.

this or any other technical rule of construction.¹ And the rule is disregarded when it would work a penalty or forfeiture,² or cause a wrong to a third party.³—Hence the rule is to be strictly limited to cases where the term in question is on its face ambiguous, and is introduced into the contract by the party seeking afterwards to impose on it a narrower sense. No such construction is applicable to words which are necessary in the statement of the particular contract, and which are as imputable to one party as to the other.—Exceptions to general conveyances of a right, as we have seen, are to be construed, in questions of doubt, against the party in whose favor they are made.⁴

¹ *Lindus v. Melrose*, 3 H. & N. 177; *Borradaile v. Hunter*, 5 M. & G. 639; *Barton v. Fitzgerald*, 15 East, 546; *Adams v. Warner*, 23 Vt. 411.

² 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 138.

³ *Ibid.*, citing 1 Kent Com. 557.

⁴ *Supra*, § 666; *Buller v. Denning*, 5 B. & C. 842; *Jackson v. Laurence*, 11 Johns. 191; *Cochecho Co. v. Whittier*, 10 N. H. 305. See *Munn v. Baker*, 2 Stark. 226; *Ford v. Beach*, 11 Q. B. 852, where it was held that ambiguities were to be construed so as best to bring out the general sense.

The following distinctions from Mr. Powell are well worthy of consideration:⁵ “If there be in the terms of a contract any obscurity or dubiousness, which cannot be cleared up by the intention of the contracting parties, or any other circumstance, and all other rules of exposition of words fail, then the construction ought to be *against him who ought to have explained himself or made the other have delivered himself fully*. And, therefore, he who is obliged ought to speak clearly, or otherwise, in general, the other party has a right to explain the clause for his own advantage. . . . In this rule of construction the law of England agrees with the Roman

law, wherein it was a maxim that all obscurities and ambiguities in a bargain of sale, or letting, must be interpreted against the seller or landlord.”

“But,” Mr. Powell adds, “in this respect the determination of the common law of England and the Roman law, are, in some instances, in opposition to the nature of things; for if the thing contracted about be burdensome to the party whose words are to be expounded, the interpretation to be agreeable to the intent, as the latter must be presumed from the nature of things, ought to be favorable to him; for every one seeks his own advantage, and consequently engages himself to as little inconvenience as possible; whereas, according to the construction alluded to, he is presumed to have bound himself as strictly as the words in their largest sense will effect. Therefore, perhaps, we should come nearer the truth, if we were to hold that the contracting party for whose benefit the agreement is burdensome to the other, is he who should either explain himself, or make the other explain himself, with all the clearness necessary to prevent ambiguity or obscurity.” Hence, “words or sentences used in the condi-

⁵ Powell Cont. (N. Y. 1825) 237 *et seq.*

§ 671. We have already seen that in construing a document the construction most in accordance with good faith will be

tion of a bond, which, considered simply in their own nature, are equivocal or ambiguous, shall, *generally*, in respect of the object of the condition, be taken in ease and favor of the obligor; the reason of which seems to be, that they are inserted for his advantage, and to discharge him from a penalty."¹

"Another exception to the rule of accepting ambiguous words most strongly against the speaker, is where such construction will work a wrong to others.

. . . Subject to the above observation, words are to be understood in the most comprehensive sense in which they are generally accepted."² The Roman rule, to the above effect, is based on the assumption that the party against whom, in case of ambiguity, the ambiguity is to be construed, could, if he had desired, have expressed himself more clearly;³ "quia potuit—apertius dicere." To the same effect is Boehmer's conclusion: "interpretatio facienda est contra eum qui clarius loqui debuisset."⁴ The question upon this arises, who is the party whose duty it was to have introduced greater definiteness into the contract? Now it may happen that the party from whom certain expressions nominally emanate may not be the party from whom they actually emanate; as when certain clauses are

taken from a draft by the other party, or where a scrivener is employed who is the agent of the other party, or who is the common agent of both parties. It may also happen that the party from whom the paper emanates may be a mere stake-holder standing impartially between the real litigants; or that by the misconduct of the other side the blame of his failure to express himself accurately should fall on such other side and not on himself.⁵ Should any one of these exceptions exist, the duty being shifted, the inference from it falls.

In the Roman law, on the question as to who is responsible in this sense for the expressions used in a contract, we have the following conclusions:—

1. In stipulations the duty is on the stipulator, as he is the one on whom the duty of propounding the question falls. On the same reasoning, in cases of a proposal and simple acceptance, then the duty of unambiguity falls on the person making the proposal.⁶

2. In contracts of sale the duty falls on the vendor, in contracts of hiring, on the hirer, because such parties, having possession of the thing sold or hired, are more familiar with its character, and, from the nature of the case, know what interests they propose to part with.

3. Subsidiary clauses are to be con-

¹ Ibid.

² See Savigny, *Sys. Röm. Rechts*, I. §§ 32 ff.; Koch. § 91.

³ L. 21 D. de cont. emt. xvii. 1. To the same effect are L. 39 D. de pactis. ii. 14; L. 99 D. de verb. ob. xlv. 1.

⁴ Boehmer's treatise is under the title "De interpretatione facienda con-

tra eum qui clarius loqui debuisset," Halle, 1767.

⁵ See these points discussed in Boehmer, *op. cit.* § 19; and in Steeb, *diss. sistens quaestionem qui sit is, qui in conventionem ambigua clarius loqui debuisset*, Tub. 1792.

⁶ See *supra*, §§ 2, 8.

taken. It follows from this that when a party introduces terms fraudulently with intention afterwards to take advantage of their ambiguity, the sense less favorable to himself will be preferred by the court; the ostensible meaning, as understood by the other side, excluding the secret meaning fraudulently reserved by himself.¹

And so as to fraudulent terms.

§ 672. "Semper in dubiis benigniora praeferenda sunt," is a Roman maxim which is authoritative in our own jurisprudence.² To the same effect is the rule "Semper in obscuris quod minimum est sequimur."³ In other words, the construction, in all cases of doubt, should be such as to dispense remedial justice.⁴

In doubt more benignant construction to be preferred.

§ 673. Although when in a will there are two incompatible provisions the last is to prevail, the common rule as to deeds is that the first of two incompatible provisions is to prevail as against the second in all cases in which the incompatibility is not such as to make the document insensible.⁵ It is otherwise

Where there are incompatible clauses, the first prevails.

strued against the party by whom they are introduced.⁶

The conclusions above stated are based on the rule which has been already discussed, that where a party making a statement is bound to disclose all the facts, he becomes liable for the consequences of his non-disclosure.⁷ A party who could state specific facts which are important ingredients in a proposal he makes, but declines so to do, is estopped from setting up these facts against the party who accepts his proposal on the faith of the terms he presents; and for the same reason a party is estopped in

setting up facts which would resolve in his favor ambiguities which the other party had *bona fide* taken in a sense more favorable to himself.⁸

¹ *Supra*, §§ 654, 657; see *Collis v. Emmett*, 1 H. Bl. 313.

² L. 168 pr. I. 192, § 1, eod., I. 32 § 4 D. de don. I. V. e. u. 24 I.

³ L. 9. 34, D. de R. I. 50, 17.

⁴ *Noonan v. Bradley*, 9 Wall. 395; see *Whitehouse v. Gas Co.*, 5 C. B. 798; *Mallan v. May*, 13 M. & W. 511.

⁵ *Furnwall v. Combes*, 3 M. & G. 736; *Cother v. Merrick*, Hardw. 84; *Cope v. Cope*, 15 Sim. 118; *Gully v. Gully*, 1 Hawks, 20.

⁶ See Zacharia, Versuch einer allgemeinen Hermeneut. Meissen, 1805, § 88.

⁷ *Supra*, § 249.

⁸ See Bigelow on Est. 3d ed. pp. 486 et seq. In *Adams v. Brown*, 16 Oh. St. 175, a party using an ambiguous name was held estopped from setting up the true meaning of the name as against

the other party who *bona fide* accepted the name in another probable meaning. In *Knights v. Wiffen*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 660, an ambiguous letter was held to estop, as against the party *bona fide* taking it on a probable construction, the party from whom it emanated; see criticism in Big. Est. 3d ed. 558.

when the second limitation only qualifies the first.¹ But when there are several contracts of different dates, the latest overrides its predecessors.²

§ 674. When there is a general conveyance of a right, this implies a conveyance of all the powers incidental to the exercise of such right.³ It is otherwise when after general terms of conveyance specifications are made indicating that the right is to be exercised in a particular way by the promisee or grantee. In such case the exercise of the right is to be ordinarily confined to the modes specified.⁴ The question in the text is one as to which there will be necessarily great conflict of opinion, since, in its bearing on political issues in this country it is a question as to which men will divide according as their tendencies are imperialistic or particularistic—as they are disposed to see great powers centralized in the national government, or are convinced that it is safer and wiser that the reserved powers should be deposited in the states—as they are, in other words, broad constructionists or strict constructionists.—It should be remembered, however, that though logically the application of the maxim to political documents should be the same as its application to business documents, there are considerations applicable in the political field which are not applicable in the business field.—So far as concerns statutory powers, it may be generally held that where there is a statute “creating a corporation for a particular purpose, and giving it powers for that particular purpose, what it does not expressly or impliedly authorize may be taken as prohibited.”⁵ In respect to business contracts, the rule is that “where parties have entered into written engagements with express stipulations, it is manifestly not desirable to extend them by implication; the presumption is that, having expressed *some*, they have expressed *all* the conditions by which they intend to be bound under that in-

¹ Chase v. Bradley, 26 Me. 538; 2 Story Const. 429–440, 519–538; Pollock, 3d ed. 132.
 Jackson v. Ireland, 3 Wend. 99; Butterfield v. Cooper, 6 Cow. 481.

² Loper v. U. S., 13 Ct. of Cl. 269.

³ See 1 Kent, Com. Part ii. Lect. xii.;

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lord Blackburn in At. Gen. v. R.

R., L. R. 5 Ap. Ca. 481; R. v. Read, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 488.

strument."¹ This, however, is to be subject to the general principle that the whole intention of the instrument is to be taken into consideration; and if the specification is introduced by way of illustration, and not of limitation, it is not to restrict the prior general terms.²

¹ *Aspdin v. Austen*, 5 Q. B. 683; *Saunders v. Evans*, 8 H. L. Ca. 729, *Emmens v. Elderton*, 4 H. L. Cas. 624. and cases cited *Brown's Leg. Max.* 654

² See *Price v. R. R.*, 16 M. & W. 244; *et seq.*
Attwood v. Small, 6 Cl. & F. 232;

CHAPTER XX.

DEEDS AND SEALED CONTRACTS.

Delivery and acceptance essential to validity of deed, § 677.

Deed takes effect from delivery, § 678.

Escrow is a deed delivered on condition, § 679.

Sealing is a solemn mode of assent, § 680.

Due sealing will be presumed, § 681.

Sealing imports consideration, § 682.

Consideration cannot be disputed by those claiming under deed, § 683.

Simple contracts distinguishable from sealed contracts as to quality, as to consideration, and as to merger, § 684.

Sealed obligations have longer limitations than unsealed, § 685.

No priority to specialty debts, § 686.

Alteration after execution avoids : filling in blanks, § 687.

Party executing deeds is bound, though other party has not executed, § 688.

Common money bond binds only for actual indebtedness, § 689.

Specialty may be modified or rescinded by parol, § 690.

Rules of construction the same as for other documents, § 691.

§ 677. To MAKE a deed operative, it is necessary that it should either be delivered to the grantee or his agent, or retained in express trust for him by the grantor.¹ It is not necessary that it should be put for this purpose actually in the hands of the grantee.² If the grantor retain it in his possession for the grantee's use, to be handed to the grantee when called for, the intention being expressed to be that the deed should be operative at once, this is equivalent to a delivery.³ Delivery to a stranger for the grantee's use is equivalent to delivery to the grantee, though to have this effect it should have been

Delivery essential to validity of deed.

¹ *Murray v. Stair*, 2 B. & C. 82; 3 Ill. 381; *Fraser v. Davie*, 11 S. C. 56; D. & R. 278; *Watkins v. Nash*, L. R. Davis v. Williams, 57 Miss. 843.
20 Eq. 262; *Xenos v. Wickham*, L. R. ² *Cocks v. Simmons*, 57 Miss. 183.
2 H. L. 296; *Younge v. Guilbeau*, 3 ³ *Garnons v. Knight*, 5 B. & C. 671; Wall. 636; *Merrills v. Swift*, 18 Conn. *Xenos v. Wickham*, L. R. 2 H. L. 296; 261; *Berkshire Ins. Co. v. Sturgiss*, see *Hawkes v. Pike*, 105 Mass. 560; 13 Gray, 178; *Whitaker v. Miller*, 83 *Latham v. Udell*, 38 Mich. 238.

manifestly so intended.¹ Possession by the party to be benefited by a deed is a ground from which to infer delivery.² Delivery of a deed may be inferred from the fact that it is left unconditionally with the proper officer after acknowledgment;³ and from the fact that it has been duly recorded;⁴ though this may be rebutted by proof that grantor never was out of possession and the grantee never in possession.⁵ Delivery of a deed may be also inferred from transfer of possession of property and possession of the concomitant papers,⁶ and it may be proved and disproved by parol.⁷ Delivery, therefore, is a question of fact to be determined on all the circumstances of the case.⁸ And the mere fact that a grantor retains possession of a deed is not sufficient in equity to make it inoperative, when it is proved *aliunde* that he regarded it as delivered.⁹ But in such cases it should be satisfactorily shown that a delivery was effected, notwithstanding the detention by the grantor.¹⁰—Acceptance as well as delivery is essential

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 136; Doe v. Knight, 5 B. & C. 671; Thatcher v. Church, 37 Mich. 764.

² Wh. on Ev. §§ 1313-4; Hall v. Bainbridge, 12 Q. B. 699; Vernol v. Vernol, 63 N. Y. 45; Black v. Shreve, 13 N. J. Eq. 455; Den v. Farlee, 21 N. J. L. 280; Carson v. Phelps, 40 Md. 73; Tunison v. Chamblin, 88 Ill. 378; Berry v. Anderson, 22 Ind. 36; Green v. Yarnell, 6 Mo. 326; Firemen's Ins. Co. v. McMillen, 29 Ala. 147.

³ Shaw v. Heyward, 7 Cush. 170; Blight v. Schenck, 10 Barr, 285; Gage v. Gage, 36 Mich. 229.

⁴ Berkshire Ins. Co. v. Sturgiss, 13 Gray, 178; Gilbert v. Ins. Co., 23 Wend. 43; Knolls v. Barnhart, 71 N. Y. 474; Boardman v. Dean, 34 Penn. St. 252; Mitchell v. Ryan, 3 Oh. St. 377; Union Ins. Co. v. Campbell, 95 Ill. 267; Cecil v. Beaver, 28 Iowa, 241; Holliday v. White, 33 Tex. 460; though see Hawkes v. Pike, 105 Mass. 560.

⁵ Knolls v. Barnhart, 71 N. Y. 474.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1313-4; Dukes v.

Spangler, 35 Oh. St. 119; Tharp v. Jarrell, 66 Ind. 52; Goodwin v. Ward, 6 Bax. 107.

⁷ Murray v. Stair, 2 B. & C. 82; S. C., 3 D. & R. 278; Stanton v. Miller, 65 Barb. 58; Beall v. Poole, 27 Md. 645; Dukes v. Spangler, 35 Oh. St. 119; Gunnell v. Cockerill, 84 Ill. 319; Newton v. Beales, 41 Iowa, 334. As to conditional delivery, see Wh. on Ev. § 930; *infra*, § 679.

⁸ Xenos v. Wickham, L. R. 2 H. L. 296; Howe v. Dewing, 2 Gray, 476; Cannon v. Cannon, 26 N. J. Eq. 319; Den v. Farlee, 21 N. J. L. 285; Duer v. James, 42 Md. 492; Wellborn v. Weaver, 17 Ga. 267.

⁹ Shelton's case, Cro. Eliz. 7; Regan v. Howe, 121 Mass. 424; Souverbye v. Arden, 1 Johns. Ch. 256; Cannon v. Cannon, 26 N. J. Eq. 319; Jones v. Oberchain, 10 Grat. 259; Dawson v. Dawson, 1 Dev. Eq. 93, 396; Wall v. Wall, 30 Miss. 91; Farrar v. Bridges, 5 Hump. 411.

¹⁰ Gould v. Day, 94 U. S. 412; Woodman v. Coolbroth, 7 Me. 181; Brown v.

to give validity to a deed, and this acceptance must be before the rights of third parties have intervened.¹

§ 678. The dates set out in a deed, though presumed *prima facie* to be true, may be contradicted and varied by *Deed takes effect from delivery.* *parol.*² The deed takes effect from the time of its delivery, and not from its date.³ "The real date of the deed is the time of the delivery."⁴ Hence, where a tax deed did not mention the year of its execution, but the acknowledgment was fully dated and the deed was shown to have been recorded the same day, it was held, that it should have been received in evidence, and that the statute of limitations

Brown, 66 Me. 316; Cook v. Brown, 34 N. H. 460; Eckman v. Eckman, 55 Penn. St. 269; Hughes v. Easten, 4 J. J. Marsh. 573; see Howard v. Patrick, 38 Mich. 795; Benneson v. Aiken, 102 Ill.

¹ Dwinal v. Holmes, 33 Me. 172; White v. Bradley, 66 Me. 254; Johnson v. Farley, 45 N. H. 505; Corbett v. Norcross, 35 N. H. 99; Hedge v. Drew, 12 Pick. 141; Samson v. Thornton, 3 Metc. 275; Fonda v. Sage, 46 Barb. 109; Mitchell v. Ryan, 3 Oh. St. 377; Union Ins. Co. v. Campbell, 95 Ill. 267. See, for other cases, article by Mr. H. W. Rogers in 13 Cent. L. J. 223. In a Massachusetts case in 1880, the issue was whether a deed to a town of a lot of land, on the condition that a library building should be erected on it, had been delivered to and accepted by the town. It was in evidence that the deed, after signature, was left with the grantor, and was acknowledged by him about a month later, and was recorded twelve days after the acknowledgment. It also appeared that the library building, in compliance with a vote of the town, had been erected on the lot. It was held that there was evidence enough to sustain a finding that the deed had

been delivered and accepted; and it was also held that the fact that the deed was found among the grantor's papers after his death did not overcome the inference of delivery drawn from the other facts in the case. Snow v. Orleans, 126 Mass. 453.

² Wh. Ev. § 977; Fowle v. Coe, 63 Me. 245; Cook v. Knowles, 38 Mich. 316.

³ Ibid.; Hall v. Cazenove, 4 East, 477; Steele v. Mart, 4 B. & C. 272; U. S. v. Le Baron, 19 How. 73; Calhoun v. Emigrant Co., 93 U. S. 124; Barnard v. Kuhn, 36 Penn. St. 383; Hanley v. Wilson, 77 N. C. 216; Solomon v. Evans, 3 McC. 274. In Byars v. Spencer, 101 Ill. 429, where a father made and acknowledged a deed to his two minor children, but retained it in his possession until his death, and declined to have it recorded, on the express ground that he would thereby place the title beyond his power or control, and expressed an intention, after he had made and acknowledged the deed, to sell the land if he could get a certain price, and in pursuance of that intention, did offer to sell the land, it was held that the deed was inoperative for want of a delivery.

⁴ Kent, C. J., Jackson v. Schoonmaker, 2 Johns. 234.

began to run thereon from the date of its recording.¹—When two deeds are acknowledged and received for record on the same day, they may be inferred to be delivered simultaneously, irrespective of the dates they bear.²—The legal effect of delivery, when consummated, is not cancelled by a subsequent return of the deed to the grantor, and its destruction by him.³

§ 679. A deed delivered with the understanding that it is not to be effective until a condition is performed is called an *escrow*.⁴ Such delivery must be to a third party as custodian of the deed; or the deed may be retained as an escrow by the grantor himself, with the understanding that on the condition being performed it shall be delivered to the grantee.⁵ That such is the intention may be proved by parol.⁶ A deed delivered as an escrow takes effect, so far as the capacity of the grantor is concerned, from the time of its original delivery, and not from the time of the happening of the condition.⁷ Hence, where the grantee, a woman, after delivering a bond on condition, and before the happening of the condition, married, the bond was held valid.⁸ And where either party dies after the depositing of an escrow, and before the happening of the condition, the deed takes effect from the time of the original delivery.⁹ The title, however, is not perfected in the grantee until the

An escrow is a deed delivered on condition.

¹ McMichael v. Carlyle, 53 Wis. 504.

² Summers v. Darne, 32 Grat. 791.

³ Lowber v. Connit, 36 Wis. 176; Rogers v. Rogers, 52 Wis.

⁴ Wh. on Ev. §§ 927–30; 1 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 4; Gudgen v. Bessett, 6 E. & B. 986; Bowker v. Burdakin, 11 M. & W. 128; Wheelwright v. Wheelwright, 2 Mass. 447; Mills v. Gore, 20 Pick. 28; Shaw v. Hayward, 7 Cush. 170.

⁵ Murray v. Stair, 2 B. & C. 82; S. C., 3 S. & R. 278; Ford v. James, 2 Abb. N. Y. Ap. 159; Beall v. Poole, 27 Md. 645; Demesmey v. Gravelin, 56 Ill. 93.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. § 930; Murray v. Stair, 2 B. & C. 82; Gudgen v. Bassett, 6 E. & B. 986; see, as qualifying this

view, Braman v. Bingham, 26 N. Y. 483; Miller v. Fletcher, 27 Grat. 403; Gibson v. Partee, 2 Dev. & Bat. L. 530.

⁷ Wheelwright v. Wheelwright, 2 Mass. 447; Foster v. Mansfield, 3 Met. 412; Black v. Hoyt, 33 Oh. St. 203; see Crooks v. Crooks, 34 Oh. St. 610.

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 138; Graham v. Graham, 1 Ves. Jur. 275.

⁹ Russell v. Rowland, 6 Wend. 666; Hunter v. Hunter, 17 Barb. 25; Kirkman v. Bank, 2 Cold. 397. That a deed may be deposited to take effect on grantor's death, see Foster v. Mansfield, 3 Met. 412; Stephens v. Rinehart, 72 Penn. St. 434; Latham v. Udell, 38 Mich. 238.

happening of the condition.¹ Hence, when a deed which is handed over as an escrow is delivered irregularly to the grantee before the happening of the condition, no title passes.²—A deed may be delivered as an escrow to an attorney acting for all the parties;³ but generally if there be a delivery as an escrow, it must be a delivery to a third party, or the representative of a third party.⁴—A mere expectation that something will be done with a deed by the grantee, does not convert it into an escrow.⁵—The grantor, when the deed has been placed in the hands of a third party as an escrow, cannot, after the happening of the act on which delivery is conditioned, prevent delivery taking effect, by getting possession of the deed.⁶

§ 680. Sealing is a solemn mode of assent adopted at a time when there were many who had property to convey who could not write their names.⁷ Sealing has been held to be sufficiently performed if the seal be impressed on the document with intent to stamp it, though no impression be left.⁸ A scroll marked out with a pen, or stamped with a block, has been held in some jurisdic-

¹ *Harkreader v. Clayton*, 56 Miss. 383.

² *Smith v. Bank*, 32 Vt. 341; *Wheelwright v. Wheelwright*, 2 Mass. 452; *Black v. Shreve*, 13 N. J. Eq. 455; *Blight v. Schenck*, 10 Penn. St. 213; *Harkreader v. Clayton*, 56 Miss. 383.

³ *Millership v. Brookes*, 5 H. & N. 797.

⁴ 1 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 5; Co. Lit. 36 a; *Howe v. Dewing*, 2 Gray, 476; *Gilbert v. Ins. Co.*, 23 Wend. 43; *Simonton's Est.*, 4 Watts, 180; *Firemen's Ins. Co. v. McMillen*, 29 Ala. 147; *Hagood v. Harley*, 8 Rich. 325; *Den v. Partee*, 2 Dev. & B. 530. The rule of law that a deed cannot be delivered to a party to whom it is made, as an escrow, to be the deed of the obligor only on the condition, and that in such case the delivery is abso-

lute and the condition nugatory, is held in Virginia to be applicable only to the case of deeds which are upon their face complete contracts, requiring nothing but delivery to make them perfect according to the intention of the parties; not to deeds which, upon their face, import that something more is to be done besides delivery to make them competent and perfect contracts according to the intention of the parties. *Wendlinger v. Smith*, 75 Va. 309.

⁵ *New Jersey State Ordinary v. Thatcher*, 41 N. J. L. 403.

⁶ *Regan v. Howe*, 121 Mass. 424.

⁷ *Wald's Pollock*, 124; Wh. on Ev. § 692.

⁸ *Sandilands in re*, L. R. 6 C. P. 411.

tions to be equivalent to a seal;¹ and for corporations, a distinct impression stamped upon paper has been held adequate.² Printed fac-similes of corporation seals, however, attached in gross by the ordinary operation of a printing press, have been held not to be technically seals.³—Two or more parties to a document may join in using a common seal for their signatures, and if this be their intention, the single seal will be sufficient.⁴ For corporations, sealing is the only mode practicable for the expression of solemn assent, though the corporation may be bound by the action without seal of its directors or other officers duly appointed.⁵ But there can be no specialty without a seal.⁶

§ 681. When a document recites a seal, and when in other respects it is duly attested and executed, accompanied by transfer of possession, the courts may pre-
sume, on slight indications, that a seal which had
been attached had fallen off, or had been otherwise
effaced.⁷ The whole question is one of fact, in which the
affixing of the seal is to be considered in the light of the ex-
trinsic circumstances.⁸

Due seal-
ing may
be pre-
sumed.

¹ *R. v. St. Paul's Covent Garden*, 7 Q. B. 232; *Woods v. Banks*, 14 N. H. 101; *Devling v. Williamson*, 9 Watts, 311; *Cromwell v. Tate*, 7 Leigh, 301; *Underwood v. Dollins*, 47 Mo. 259. In New York by statute (2 Fay Stat. 13), public seals may be made by a stamp on paper, but private seals "shall be made as heretofore on wafer, wax, or some similar substance."

² *Davidson v. Cooper*, 11 M. & W. 778; *Pillow v. Roberts*, 13 How. 472; *Woodman v. R. R.*, 50 Me. 549; *Hendee v. Pinkerton*, 14 Allen, 381; *Curtis v. Leavitt*, 15 N. Y. 9; *Corrigan v. Falls Co.*, 3 Halst. Ch. 489.

³ *Bates v. R. R.*, 10 Allen, 251.

⁴ *Ball v. Dunsterville*, 4 T. R. 313; *Tasker v. Bartlett*, 5 Cush. 359; *Tunford v. Lead Co.*, 54 Mo. 426; *Leake*, 2d ed. 136.

⁵ *Wh. on Ag. §§ 59 et seq.*; *Wh. on Ev. § 694*; *supra*, §§ 128 et seq.

⁶ *Ibid.*; see *Chilton v. People*, 66 Ill. 501; *supra*, § 134.

⁷ *Wh. on Ev. § 1314*; *Talbot v. Hodson*, 7 Taunt. 251; *Fassett v. Brown*, Peake, 23; *Burdett v. Spillsbury*, 6 M. & G. 386; 10 Cl. & F. 340; *Hall v. Bainbridge*, 12 Q. B. 699; *Sandilands in re*, L. R. 6 C. P. 411; *Ward v. Lewis*, 4 Pick. 518; *Vernol v. Vernol*, 63 N. Y. 45. See *Flowery Mining Co. v. Mining Co.*, 16 Nev. 302. Acknowledging and delivering validates a deed, no matter by whom the grantor's name and seal were affixed; and after acknowledgment and delivery he cannot deny his signature and seal. *Clough v. Clough*, 73 Me. 487, citing *Bartlett v. Deake*, 100 Mass. 174.

⁸ *Xenos v. Wickham*, L. R. 2 H. L. 296.

§ 682. By an arbitrary rule of the common law, a seal, as we have already seen,¹ imports consideration, and in a suit on a sealed instrument a consideration need not be proved. The reason sometimes given is that affixing a seal implies greater deliberation than does attaching a signature, and that when a party deliberately determines to make a gift he should be permitted so to do. So far as concerns the supposed deliberation attending the using of a seal, the distinction is without reason. A scroll in the shape of a seal is more easily made than a name is signed; and a seal may be stamped on wax even more easily than a scroll can be made. If, however, it is generally understood that a sealed promise does not require a consideration, then persons wishing to make a promise without consideration will resort to a seal for the purpose; and the validity of the promise will rest on the position, that where a party desires to bind himself without consideration he should be permitted to do so if he use the proper terms.² The unreasonableness of the distinction between sealed and unsealed documents, however, has led to important modifications of the principle that a sealed document imports consideration while an unsealed document does not. In the first place commercial paper is taken out of the rule. It is not sealed, yet on suing on it consideration need not be proved. In the second place, while some consid-

Sealing
imports
considera-
tion.

¹ *Supra*, § 495.

² Plowden, 308, speaks as follows: "Because words are oftentimes spoken by men unadvisedly and without deliberation, the law has provided that a contract by words shall not bind without consideration. But where the agreement is by deed, there is more time for deliberation. For when a man passes a thing by deed, first there is the determination of the mind to do it, and upon that he causes it to be written, which is one part of the deliberation; and afterwards he puts his seal to it, which is another part of deliberation; and lastly he delivers the writing as his deed, which is the consum-

mation of his resolution." This is adopted as the reason of the distinction by Leake, 2d ed. 147, following Wilmut, J., in *Pillens v. Microp*, 3 Burr. 1670; *Fallowes v. Taylor*, 7 T. R. 475. But the truth is there are few documents which require so little time and deliberation as do bonds, powers of attorney, and transfers of stock. A printed form is filled up by the insertion of a few written words, and a seal which may be a mere wafer or even a written scroll is attached with less deliberation, so far at least as the time is concerned, than would be required to write a name. A different explanation is given in *Holmes's Common Law*, 134, 254, 258.

eration must be proved, with this exception, on suing on an unsealed document, the amount of the consideration is of no consequence unless the question of fraud be raised; and though a man cannot bargain away his property for nothing, yet he can sell it for a price which is virtually giving it away. In the third place, a court of equity, while it regards a sealed grant as binding without consideration, will not, should the donor in such a grant desire to retreat from it, compel him to consummate it by a specific performance. A sealed contract will not be rescinded because it is without consideration, but it will not be enforced when it is without consideration.¹

§ 683. A party claiming under a sealed covenant is bound by the general character of the consideration stated in the document. He cannot, for instance, if money be averred, prove natural love and affection; or if natural love and affection be averred, prove money.² Yet where a deed is assailed by third parties on ground of fraud, it is admissible, in order to sustain the deed, to show a valuable consideration paid; and it is also admissible for an adverse party to attack the averment of consideration.³

Consideration cannot be disputed by those claiming under deed.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 147; Jefferys v. Jefferys, Cr. & Ph. 138; and cases cited *supra*, § 495; Kekewich v. Manning, 1 D. M. & G. 176. It was said in this case that a "voluntary covenant, though under seal, in equity, where at least the covenantor is living, or where specific performance of such a covenant is sought, . . . stands scarcely, or not at all, on a better footing than if it were contained in an instrument unsealed." As authorities to the position that sealed contracts bind without consideration, see Irons v. Smallpiece, 2 B. & Ald. 551; Fallows v. Taylor, 7 T. R. 475; Farrington v. Barr, 36 N. H. 86; Graves v. Graves, 29 N. H. 129; Trafton v. Howes, 102 Mass. 533; Center v. Billingham, 1 Cow. 33; Dale

v. Roosevelt, 9 Cow. 307; Guy v. McLean, 1 Dev. 46.

² Peacock v. Monk, 1 Ves. Sen. 128; Gale v. Williamson, 8 M. & W. 408; Morse v. Shattuck, 4 N. H. 229; Holbrook v. Holbrook, 30 Vt. 432; Morris Canal Co. v. Ryerson, 27 N. J. L. 457; Clagett v. Hall, 9 Gill & J. 80.

³ Filmer v. Gott, 4 Br. P. C. 230; Clifford v. Turrell, 1 Y. & C. 138; Brown v. Lunt, 37 Me. 423; Abbott v. Marshall, 48 Me. 44; Wait v. Wait, 28 Vt. 350; Lewis v. Brewster, 57 Penn. St. 410; Potter v. Everitt, 7 Ired. Eq. 152; Hair v. Little, 28 Ala. 236; Eysstra v. Capella, 61 Mo. 578; and see other cases cited Wh. on Ev. §§ 923-8, 1046-7.

§ 684. As "simple" contracts at common law are to be considered all contracts not under seal; and whether such contracts are written or unwritten, they fall under the general term of *parol*.¹ The distinction between the two classes of documents as to consideration has been already noticed.² It is also to be observed that the supposed superior solemnity and dignity of sealed documents have led to the rule that when such a document is executed, it absorbs all prior bargaining directed to the same object. This doctrine, however, is not peculiar to sealed documents. No matter how complex and deliberate may have been the negotiations preliminary to a written contract, those negotiations are regarded as all merged in the contract.³ With respect to sealed documents the process is carried a step further, and it is held that when a sealed obligation is given for a debt already secured by an unsealed writing, the unsealed is merged in the sealed document.⁴ But this supposes the sealed document to give the better security. If it do not (as might be the case when the unsealed document is attended by collaterals which the sealed document does not carry) then there should be no merger.⁵ Hence on the one side articles of agreement for a sale are merged in the deed of sale;⁶ and on the other side there is no merger on collateral matters not included in the matured deed, but included in the preparatory documents, and

Simple contracts distinguishable from sealed contracts as to quality, as to consideration, and as to merger.

¹ *Rann v. Hughes*, 7 L. R. 350 n.; *Beckham v. Drake*, 9 M. & W. 92; *Stackpole v. Arnold*, 11 Mass. 30; *Cook v. Bradley*, 7 Conn. 57; *Burnett v. Biscoe*, 4 John. 235; *Perrine v. Cheeseman*, 6 Halst. 174; see observations, *supra*, § 642, as to ambiguity of term "*parol*."

² *Supra*, §§ 495, 682.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 1014, and see *supra*, § 5.

⁴ *Matters v. Brown*, 1 H. & C. 686; *Drake v. Mitchell*, 3 East, 251; *Banorjee v. Hovey*, 5 Mass. 11. A bond, therefore, taken from a partner, extinguishes a debt due from the part-

nership; *Clemens v. Brush*, 3 John. Cas. 180; *Tom v. Goodrich*, 2 John. 213; *Andrews v. Smith*, 9 Wend. 53; *Hoskinson v. Elliott*, 62 Penn. St. 393; *Bennett v. Caldwell*, 70 Penn. St. 253; see *infra*, §§ 852, 1039.

⁵ See generally *Twopenny v. Young*, 3 B. & C. 210; 5 D. & R. 262; *Ward v. Johnson*, 13 Mass. 148.

⁶ *Williams v. Hathaway*, 19 Pick. 387; *Witbeck v. Waine*, 16 N. Y. 532; *Jones v. Johnson*, 3 W. & S. 276; *Jones v. Wood*, 16 Penn. St. 25; *Carter v. Beck*, 40 Ala. 599; see other cases in 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th ed. 9; and see *supra*, § 5 *et seq.*

meant to be retained.¹ Nor does a simple contract merge in a specialty given merely as collateral security.²

§ 685. The distinction between sealed and unsealed documents, so far as concerns the statute of limitations, is still, in England and in most of our states, preserved. To a simple obligation the statute assigns six years as the period after which, unless renewed by acknowledgment, it ceases to be of force; while to contracts under seal the period assigned by the common law is twenty years, though before that period the presumption of payment from lapse of time may be applicable if there be other circumstances tending to this conclusion.³ And while there is a great variety of legislation in our states in respect to limitations of debts, debts by specialty have assigned to them in most jurisdictions a more extended term of vitality than other debts. —Aside from statutes of limitation, a bond, if unpaid and unacknowledged for twenty years, is irrebuttably presumed to have been paid.⁴

Sealed obligations have longer limitations than unsealed.

§ 686. At common law, specialty creditors (*i. e.*, creditors secured by obligations under seal) had a priority over other creditors in the distribution of decedents' estates. This priority is now by statute abolished in England,⁵ and is not recognized in the United States, either in the distribution of decedent or of insolvent estates. Nor have we in this country recognized the common law rule making a seal necessary to charging of a debt on the real assets of a deceased debtor. And in England this distinction no longer exists.⁶

No priority to specialty debts.

§ 687. An alteration of a deed after its execution works its avoidance.⁷ If a blank is to be filled in, there must be, in all material matters, a new execution and

Alteration after execu-

¹ *Witbeck v. Waine*, 16 N. Y. 535; *Long v. Hartwell*, 5 Vroom L. 116; *Cox v. Henry*, 32 Penn. St. 18.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 967.

⁴ *Wh. on Ev.* § 1360, and cases there cited.

³ *Drake v. Mitchell*, 3 East, 251; *Twopenny v. Young*, 3 B. & C. 210; *Solly v. Forbes*, 2 B. & B. 38; *Ban- orgee v. Hovey*, 5 Mass. 11; *Charles v. Scott*, 1 S. & R. 294; and cases above cited. See also cases cited *infra*, § 1039.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 148.

⁶ *Leake*, 2d ed. 149. As to common law, see 2 Black. Com. 463.

⁷ *Infra*, § 695; *Powell v. Duff*, 3 Camp. 181; *Cambridge Bank v. Hyde*, 131 Mass. 77.

tion avoids; delivery.¹ Without such new execution and delivery, filling in the deed is avoided by a material alteration.² Thus, blanks. the deed is avoided by a material alteration.² Thus, where a deed of composition was made between a debtor and certain creditors whose names, it was alleged in the deed, were given in a schedule, but the schedule was not attached until after execution and registration, the deed was held to be void.³ A bond, also, issued by a company, in which the name of the payee was not introduced until after the delivery of the bond, was held void.⁴ A transfer of shares with blanks as to the names of the purchasers and as to the number of the shares, has been held in England not to be susceptible of validation, after delivery, by filling the blanks through the agency of a third party in the absence of the assignor; and it was held that the practice of the London stock exchange, for sellers to deliver transfers in blank, the blanks to be filled by the purchasing broker, could not be put in evidence to modify this rule.⁵ But where a deed would be operative without a schedule, and the schedule only goes to explain in detail latent obscurities, the attaching the schedule does not invalidate.⁶ Thus, an assignment for the benefit of creditors was held not to be invalidated by the omission of a schedule of creditors, when the assignee's name is properly given and the trusts properly described.⁷ And where a deed is not necessary for the transfer of shares, a transferee may fill in the blanks of a transfer and thus take the title.⁸

§ 688. An acceptance of a contract under seal is inferred from the contract coming into the hands of the party
Party executing deed is bound, benefited. In order to sue, therefore, on the con-

¹ Hibblewhite v. M'Morine, 6 M. & W. 200.

² *Infra*, §§ 695 *et seq.*

³ Sellin v. Price, L. R. 2 Ex. 189; Wood v. Slack, L. R. 3 Q. B. 379. See for similar ruling on omission of schedule, Weeks v. Maillardet, 14 East, 568, and other cases cited *infra*, §§ 695 *et seq.*

⁴ Enthoven v. Hoyle, 13 C. B. 373. See *infra*, §§ 695 *et seq.*

⁵ Hibblewhite v. M'Morine, 6 M. & W. 200; Taylor v. R. R., 4 D. & J. 559; Swan v. Land Co., 2 H. & C. 175; see *infra*, §§ 695 *et seq.*

⁶ Harry v. Wall, 1 B. & Ald. 103. As to schedule, see further *infra*, § 696.

⁷ West v. Steward, 14 M. & W. 47.

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 140, citing Sargent *ex parte*, L. R. 17 Eq. 273; Mavino's case, L. R. 2 Ch. 596; Ortigosa v. Brown, 47 L. J. C. 168.

tract, it is not necessary for him to notify the grantor of his acceptance, or even to execute the deed.¹ Even where a deed contains covenants on both sides, the covenants on one side being in consideration of the covenants on the other side, the party executing the deed may be bound, although the other party has not executed the deed. “The cases establish that a covenantee in an ordinary indenture, who is a party to it, may sue the covenantor who executed it, although he himself never did; for he is a party, although he did not execute, and parties to an indenture may sue though strangers cannot; and it makes no difference that the covenants of the defendant are therein stated to be in *consideration* of those of the covenantee. Of this there is no doubt, nor that a covenant binds without consideration.”² But when the covenants made by the party first executing the deed are dependent on covenants to be executed by the other party, then the first class of covenants cannot be enforced until the performance of the correlative covenants, or at least until that performance is undertaken by the execution of the deed by the other party.³ Thus, “with respect to leases by indenture, the covenants which depend on the interest in the lease, and are made because the covenantor has that interest—such as those to repair and pay rent during the term—are not obligatory, if the lessor does not execute, not because the lessor is not a party, but because that interest has not been created to which such covenants are annexed, and during which only they operate; the foundation of the covenant failing, the covenant fails also. Unless there be a term, a covenant to repair *during* it is void. But with respect to collateral covenants not depending on the interest in the land, it is otherwise, and they are obligatory.”⁴

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 140; *Petrie v. Bury*, 3 B. & C. 353; *Rose v. Poulton*, 2 B. & Ad. 822; *Northampton Gas Co. v. Parnell*, 15 C. B. 630; *Macdonald v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 9 Q. B. 332.

² Per cur. in *Pitman v. Woodbury*, 3 Ex. 11, adopted in Leake, 2d ed. 141.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 141.

⁴ Per cur. in *Pitman v. Woodbury*, 3 Ex. 11, dissenting from *Cooch v. Goodman*, 2 Q. B. 580, and adopted in Leake, 2d ed. 141.

§ 689. In the common money bond, the obligor binds himself in double the amount of the debt to pay the debt at a particular day, the condition being that in case of such payment the cautionary amount shall not be due. But bonds with penalties are not limited to money conditions. Other conditions, such as special acts to be done by the obligor or by third parties, may be introduced. But whatever may be the conditions, courts of equity have always refused to permit the penalty to be exacted if the condition was performed, and in case of failure to perform the condition in bonds for payment of money, have limited the amount to be collected to the principal debt with interest. And by statute of 4 & 5 Anne, c. 16, in force in several jurisdictions in the United States, and adopted as part of the common law in other jurisdictions, it is provided that "where an action is brought on any bond which hath a condition to make void the same upon payment of a lesser sum at day or place certain, if the obligor have, before the action brought, paid to the obligee the principal and interest due by the condition, though such payment was not made according to the condition, yet it shall and may be pleaded in bar of such action, and shall be as effectual a bar thereof as if the money had been paid at the day and place according to the condition." And by section 18, the defendant may pay into court the principal money and interest, with costs, in satisfaction of the bond. Under this and subsequent statutes, a bond with a condition creates a debt payable only on breach of the condition, and in an action on the bond a plea that the condition had not been broken is good in bar of the suit.¹ And in equity, bonds with special conditions are regarded as being directed exclusively to the performance of the condition, and the obligee will not be permitted, whenever the condition can be performed under the direction of the court, to turn into a claim for the penalty his right to have the condition performed.²

¹ *Milbourn v. Ewart*, 5 T. R. 381; *Watson*, 1 Gray, 561; *Lindesay v. Hinton v. Acraman*, 2 C. B. 367; *Beswick v. Swindalls*, 3 A. & E. 868; *Taylor v. Sandiford*, 7 Wheat. 13; *Wallis v. Carpenter*, 13 Allen, 19; *Dewey v. Amesley*, 6 Ired. 186.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 146; *Chilliner v. Chilliner*, 2 Ves. Sen. 528.

§ 690. As is elsewhere fully seen, a specialty may be modified or rescinded by parol if there be no statutory inhibition, supposing that in this way the mutual intention of the parties is effected, and supposing that the rights of third parties are not affected.¹

Specialty may be modified or rescinded by parol.

§ 691. The rules for the construction of sealed documents are the same as those which obtain for the construction of other documents.²

Rules of construction the same as for other documents.

¹ See Wh. on Ev. §§ 1050 *et seq.*
See *Brown v. Brine*, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 5;
Canal Co. v. Ray, 101 U. S. 502.

² See fully *supra*, §§ 627 *et seq.*; 2
Story Eq. Jur. §§ 736-47; *Doloret v.*
Rothschild, 1 Sim. & St. 590.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOST AND ALTERED CONTRACTS.

Lost contracts may be enforced on parol proof, § 694.	Adverse parties not to be prejudiced by alteration, § 699.
Material alteration in favor of custodian of paper precludes him from benefiting by it, § 695.	Rule as to negotiable paper, § 700.
Alterations are material when tending to benefit party making them, § 696.	As to policies of insurance, § 701.
Alterations made during negotiations do not invalidate, § 697.	Alteration by stranger does not vitiate, § 702.
Burden on party producing altered writing, § 698.	So of accidental alteration, § 703.
	Vested rights not affected, § 704.
	Alterations by consent when expressing change of intention start a new contract, § 705.

§ 694. A WRITTEN contract when lost or destroyed may be proved by parol, and the contract as thus reproduced, supposing its terms can be established, is as much a basis for suit as would be the original document.¹—An exception exists in this respect with regard to negotiable paper. To the *bona fide* holder of such paper the fact that it had been intermediately lost is no defence; hence, parties sued on a lost bill or note are entitled to require that they should be indemnified as to any subsequent suit by parties by whom the missing paper should be produced.² And, though the rule does not apply to non-negotiable paper,³ it applies to negotiable paper payable to order though not yet endorsed.⁴ But a court of equity will compel payment on lost negotiable paper on sufficient indemnity being tendered;⁵ and in England, by the common law procedure act, the loss of a negotiable instrument does not

¹ Wh. on Ev. §§ 129, 150.

² Davis v. Dodd, 4 Taunt. 602; Hansard v. Robinson, 7 B. & C. 90.

³ Wain v. Bailey, 10 A. & E. 616.

⁴ Ramuz v. Crowe, 1 Ex. 167; Stone

v. Clough, 41 N. H. 290; Spencer v. Dearth, 43 Vt. 98.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 819; Byles on Bills, 9th ed. 365; Hansard v. Robinson, 7 B. & Cr. 95.

preclude suit being brought on it in all cases where the plaintiff tenders indemnity.¹—On destroyed paper an action can be maintained,² and in Massachusetts destroyed bills are placed in the same position as those that are lost.³

§ 695. A written contract is avoided by material alterations made in it when in the hands of the party interested in the change. The rule, as originally adopted, was meant to prevent fraud. A party who either makes or negligently permits an alteration to be made in his favor in a document in his custody, ought to be precluded from taking anything under the document so altered. He may have acted without guile, but at the best he acted improvidently, and justice is in the long run promoted by saying, that to tamper in one's own favor with a muniment of title makes it totally inoperative. It is true that in respect to contracts recorded under our registry statutes this reasoning loses much of its force. But to documents of all classes, so far as they are relied on for title, the rule may be held applicable.⁴ The principle is that while alterations by accident or by the interference of others, will not, as we will presently see, prejudice a party holding a document, yet a party making or permitting an alteration in his own favor in a document held by him should not be allowed to avail himself of such document.⁵ Were

Material alteration in favor of custodian of paper precludes him from benefiting by it.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 819.

² Story on Notes, § 107.

³ *McGregory v. McGregor*, 107 Mass. 543.

⁴ Wh. on Ev. §§ 621 *et seq.*; Leake on Cont. 2d ed. 805; *Falmouth v. Roberts*, 9 M. & W. 471; *Parry v. Nicholson*, 13 M. & W. 779; *Davidson v. Cooper*, 13 M. & W. 352; *Powell v. Divett*, 15 East, 29; *Thornton v. Appleton*, 29 Me. 298; *Bassett v. Bassett*, 55 Me. 125; *Lewis v. Payn*, 8 Cow. 71; *Wright v. Wright*, 2 Halst. 175; *Boalt v. Brown*, 13 Oh. St. 364.

⁵ See *Adams v. Frye*, 3 Met. Mass. 103, where it was held that the addition of the name of a subscribing wit-

ness by the obligee of a bond avoided it as against the obligor. "It seems to us," said Dewey, J., "that we ought not to sanction a principle which would permit the holder of an obligation thus to tamper with it with entire impunity. But such would be the necessary consequence of an adjudication, that the subsequent addition of the name of an attesting witness, without the privity or consent of the obligee, is not a material alteration of the instrument, and would under no circumstances affect its validity." See, as sustaining the text, *Smith v. U. S.*, 2 Wall. 219; *Miller v. Stewart*, 4 Wash. C. C. 26; *Brackett v. Mount-*

this rule not maintained, a party holding a document might make or connive at material alterations in the terms, and then take the chance of the alterations being detected, losing nothing if he fail in establishing them, and gaining the fruits of his fraud if he succeed.¹ So highly is such spoliation reprobated, that a person who materially and designedly alters in his own favor a document is precluded from ever putting such document in evidence.²

§ 696. Whether an alteration is so material as to avoid a contract under the rule above given, depends upon the bearing of the alteration on the interests of the party who makes or permits the alteration.³ It has been held that where a composition deed, under the English bankruptcy act, purported to embrace all the creditors, and was adequately executed by a sufficient majority under the statute, the subsequent addition of the names of other creditors in the schedule, this in no wise affecting the document, was not a material alteration;⁴ though it is otherwise when the schedule itself is added after execution and registration.⁵ Adding a seal, so as to give, if valid, additional force to a contract, avoids it;⁶ and so does the intro-

fort, 2 Fairf. 115; Martendale v. Follet, 1 N. H. 95; Bowers v. Jewell, 2 N. H. 543; Langdon v. Paul, 20 Vt. 217; Smith v. Crooker, 5 Mass. 538; Doane v. Eldridge, 16 Gray, 254; Stoddard v. Penniman, 108 Mass. 366; Draper v. Wood, 112 Mass. 315; Booth v. Powers, 56 N. Y. 22; Churchman v. Smith, 6 Whart. 146; Hill v. Cooley, 46 Penn. St. 259; Farmers' Ins. Co. v. Bair, 82 Penn. St. 33; Carr v. Welch, 46 Ill. 88; Benedict v. Miner, 58 Ill. 19; Dietz v. Harder, 72 Ind. 208; Comstock v. Smith, 26 Mich. 306; Vaughan v. Fowler, 14 S. C. 355; Doster v. Brown, 25 Ga. 24; Washington Bk. v. Ecky, 51 Mo. 272.

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 629.

² Ibid.; Martendale v. Follet, 1 N. H. 95; Angle v. Ins. Co., 92 U. S. 330; Jewett v. Hodgden, 3 Greenl. 103;

Thornton v. Appleton, 29 Me. 298; Goodman v. Eastman, 4 N. H. 455; Cape Ann Nat. Bk. v. Burns, 129 Mass. 596; McGrath v. Clark, 56 N. Y. 34; Babb v. Clemson, 10 S. & R. 419; Marshall v. Gougler, 10 S. & R. 164; Kountz v. Kennedy, 63 Penn. St. 187; Holmes v. Trumper, 22 Mich. 427; Brooks v. Allen, 62 Ind. 401; Newell v. Mayberry, 3 Leigh, 250; Mills v. Starr, 2 Bailey, 359; Toomer v. Rutland, 57 Ala. 379.

³ See Wh. on Ev. § 622; Leake, 807; Hutchins v. Scott, 2 M. & W. 809; Vance v. Lowther, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 176; Smith v. Crooker, 5 Mass. 539; Neff v. Horner, 63 Penn. St. 327.

⁴ Wood v. Slack, L. R. 3 Q. B. 379.

⁵ Sallin v. Price, L. R. 2 Ex. 189.

⁶ Davidson v. Cooper, 13 M. & W. 343.

duction of a qualification enhancing the value of the property passing by the contract.¹ As immaterial have been held the alteration of a name in a recital, the object being merely greater accuracy, without in any way enlarging liability;² the insertion of "or bearer" in place of "or order," in a case where it did not at all appear that this varied the rights of the parties;³ the adding the words "on demand" to a promissory note;⁴ the addition of a harmless designation (*e. g.* "sheriff of the county") to a name;⁵ the correction of an obvious error;⁶ the insertion of a word which was so obviously dropped out in engrossing that the court in construing the passage would have regarded the word as understood;⁷ and the interlining innocently of explanatory words, in no wise affecting the sense.⁸ The rule, it is said, is applicable even to cases where the alteration was made *bona fide*, but without the consent of the opposite party; and this is rightfully the case when one party makes a material alteration in his own favor in the body of a document after it has been duly executed and delivered.⁹ But such is not the case with alterations which do not go to the body of the document. Thus, where the name of a witness

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 807; Powell v. Divett, 15 East, 29; Mollatt v. Wackerboth, 5 C. B. 181.

² Trew v. Burton, 1 C. & M. 533.

³ Flint v. Craig, 59 Barb. 319; and other cases *infra*, § 699.

⁴ Aldous v. Cornwell, L. R. 3 Q. B. 573.

⁵ Pigot's case, 11 Co. 26 b.

⁶ Hutchins v. Scott, 2 M. & W. 809.

⁷ Waugh v. Russell, 5 Taunt. 707; Hale v. Russ, 1 Greenl. 334; Knapp v. Maltby, 13 Wend. 587.

⁸ Aldous v. Cornwell, L. R. 3 Q. B. 573; Falmouth v. Roberts, 9 M. & W. 469; Hutchins v. Scott, 2 M. & W. 809; Hunt v. Adams, 6 Mass. 519; Brown v. Pinkham, 18 Pick. 172. That when the alterations are immaterial they do not avoid, see Bluck v. Gompertz, 7 Exch. R. 862; Keane v. Smallbone, 17 C. B. 179; Waugh v.

Russell, 5 Taunt. 707; Aldous v. Cornwell, L. R. 3 Q. B. 573; Major v. Hansen, 2 Biss. 195; Littlefield v. Coombs, 71 Me. 110; Pequawket Bridge v. Mathes, 8 N. H. 139; Smith v. Crooker, 5 Mass. 538; Brown v. Pinkham, 18 Pick. 172; Kountz v. Kennedy, 63 Penn. St. 187; Kimmel's App., 91 Penn. St. 471; Robertson v. Hay, 91 Penn. St. 242; Herrick v. Baldwin, 17 Minn. 209; Allen v. Sales, 56 Mo. 28; and so when the alteration, though material, does not affect the liability of the party sued to the party suing. Hutchins v. Scott, 2 M. & W. 809; Falmouth v. Roberts, 9 M. & W. 471; Davidson v. Cooper, 13 M. & W. 343; Ward v. Lumley, 5 H. & N. 87; U. S. v. Spalding, 2 Mason, 478.

⁹ See Bank of Hindustan v. Smith, 36 L. J. C. P. 241.

was added to a bond, Dewey, J., while saying that the alteration was undoubtedly material, on the ground that "by adding to the bond the name of an attesting witness, the obligee became entitled to show the due execution of the same by proving the handwriting of the supposed attesting witness, if the witness was out of the jurisdiction of the court;" added: "But we think that it would be too severe a rule, and one which might operate with great hardship upon an innocent party, to hold inflexibly that such alteration would in all cases discharge the obligor from the performance of his contract or obligation. If an alteration like that which was made in the present case can be shown to have been made honestly, if it can be reasonably accounted for as done under some misapprehension or mistake, or with the supposed assent of the obligor, it should not operate to avoid the obligation. But, on the other hand, if fraudulently done, and with a view to gain any improper advantage, it is right and proper that the fraudulent party should lose wholly the right to enforce his original contract in a court of law."¹ The test is, intent to defraud; and of this, materiality is an important factor. If immaterial, an intent to defraud will not be inferred. And even if material, the document will not be necessarily vitiated where there was no fraudulent intent.²—An alteration in the number of a note issued by the bank of England, it has been held, does not avoid the note so as to enable the bank to refuse payment to a *bona fide* purchaser without notice.³

¹ Adams v. Frye, 3 Met. 103.

² Ibid.; Thornton v. Appleton, 29 Me. 298; Willard v. Clark, 7 Met. 435; Marshall v. Gougler, 10 S. & R. 164.

³ Suffell v. Bank, L. R. 7 Q. B. D. 270. "The leading authority," said Lord Coleridge, C. J., "on the subject is the well-known case of Master v. Miller, 4 T. Rep. 320; in error, 2 Hen. Bl. 141. There an unauthorized alteration in a bill of exchange, whereby the day of payment was accelerated, was held to avoid the instrument, even as against the innocent holder for value. The nature of the alteration, and therefore

the original contract, being capable of proof, made no difference in the opinion of the judges. Buller, J., dissented, and I think was overruled rather than answered by the majority who decided the case, but so is the law; and there is no doubt that the breadth of the language both of Lord Kenyon and Eyre, C. J., taken literally, would cover this case. But it has always been held that the alteration which vitiates the instrument must be a material alteration, i. e., must be one which alters or attempts to alter the character of the instrument itself, and

§ 697. When there are several parties to a contract, by some of whom it has been already signed, alterations as to the obligations of parties who have not yet signed may be made prior to their signatures without affecting the liabilities of the parties who have already signed. Whenever the document is divisible as to the parties signing, the part relating to each party may for this purpose be considered an independent obligation.¹ A document delivered as an escrow, also, may be altered so that the rights of prior non-consenting parties are not thereby affected;² and a grantor who retains control of a deed, either actually or constructively, may be understood to reserve the

Alterations made during negotiations do not invalidate.

which affects, or may affect, the contract which the instrument contains, or is evidence of. *Sanderson v. Symonds*, 1 B. & B. 426, and *Aldous v. Cornwell*, L. Rep. 3 Q. B. 573; 37 L. J. 201, Q. B., are clear authorities to show that an immaterial alteration will not do. My brother Lush, in his excellent judgment in *Aldous v. Cornwell*, *ubi supra*, says that the decision in *Sanderson v. Symonds*, *ubi supra*, was confined by the judges to policies of insurance. There are expressions in the judgments of the lord chief justice and Park, J., which support his view—and the instrument in question was a policy. But the language of the judges, I think, goes beyond this; and Richardson, J., a very great and most accurate lawyer, does not in any way qualify the generality of his language. *Catton v. Simpson*, 8 A. & E. 136, is to the same effect; and though that case was expressly overruled in *Gardner v. Walsh*, 25 L. T. 168; 5 E. & B. 83, it was so, not on the ground that an immaterial alteration avoided the instrument, but that the alteration in *Catton v. Simpson*, *ubi supra*, was material. In the sense in which the word 'material' has been used in all the cases I have been able to refer to, of which *Master v. Miller*, *ubi supra*, *Burchfield v. Moore*,

23 L. J. 143; 3 E. & B. 683, and *Gardner v. Walsh*, *ubi supra*, are only examples, the alteration has been held material because it varied, or attempted to vary, the contract. Here the alteration is nothing of the sort. It is material in the popular sense, because it interposes some difficulty in the way of the Bank of England detecting, or helping to detect, the original fraud, by making it harder to trace the notes or stop them at the bank. But this is wholly a collateral matter. An alteration in this popular and collateral sense has never yet been held to vitiate an instrument in the hands of an innocent holder; Sir John Holker admitted this in fact, but urged that the generality of the words in *Master v. Miller*, *ubi supra*, was wide enough to take in this case, and that it was wise so to extend them. I do not think so, and I must decline the invitation."

¹ *Lewis v. Bingham*, 4 B. & Ald. 672; *Hall v. Chandless*, 4 Bing. 123; *Davidson v. Cooper*, 11 M. & W. 802; *West v. Steward*, 14 M. & W. 47; *Little v. Herndon*, 10 Wall. 26; *Bernstien v. Ricks*, 20 La. An. 409; *Blake v. Coleman*, 22 Wis. 415.

² *West v. Steward*, 14 M. & W. 49; *Gudgen v. Bassett*, 6 E. & B. 986. As to escrow, see *supra*, § 679.

right to alter, with notice to the other parties, the document, even though already signed by himself, at any time before it passes from him by delivery.¹

§ 698. When a document contains interlineations and alterations, on their face trivial or tending merely to clear an obvious obscurity, the burden of proving bad faith is on the party setting up bad faith. On the other hand, the burden of explaining a suspicious alteration is on the party relying on the document as altered.² In negotiable paper this is eminently the case; the burden being on the party producing such paper on its face altered, to explain the alteration.³ When the execu-

Burden on party producing altered writing.

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 625; *Jones v. Jones*, 1 C. & M. 721; *Garnons v. Knight*, 5 B. & C. 671; *Xenos v. Wickham*, L. R. 2 H. L. 296; *Richards v. Lewis*, 11 C. B. 1046; *Little v. Herndon*, 10 Wall. 26. In *Keen v. Monroe*, 75 Va. 424, we have the following in the opinion of Anderson, J.: "Whether alterations were made or not after the signing, sealing, and delivery of the instrument, without the knowledge or consent of the obligor, is a question of fact, which may properly be submitted to the jury; but whether such alterations were material or not, is a question of law to be decided by the court. *Steele's Lessee v. Spencer*, 1 Peters R. 552; *Stephens v. Graham*, 7 Serg. & R. 505; *Bowers v. Jewell*, 2 N. Hamp. R. 543." "If the deed can be enforced without filling the blank, filling it is immaterial. *Eagleton v. Gutteridge*, 11 Mees. & Welsb. 465; *Smith v. Crooker*, 5 Mass. R. 538; 2 Rob. Prac. (new), 15. See also *Ross v. Overton*, 3 Call, 309, and *Whiting v. Daniel*, 1 Hen. & Mumf. 391."

² Wh. on Ev. §§ 621, 629; *Leake*, 2d ed. 813; *Clifford v. Parker*, 2 M. & G. 909; *Simmons v. Rudall*, 1 Sim. N. S. 136; *Sibley v. Fisher*, 7 A. & E. 444; *Miller v. Stewart*, 4 Wash. C. C. 26; *Wood v. Steele*, 6 Wall. 80; *Boothly v. Stanley*, 34 Me. 515; *Ches-*

ley v. Frost, 1 N. H. 145; *Davis v. Jenney*, 1 Met. Mass. 221; *Vose v. Dolan*, 108 Mass. 155; *Bailey v. Taylor*, 11 Conn. 531; *Jackson v. Jacoby*, 9 Cow. 125; *Herrick v. Malin*, 22 Wend. 388; *Simpson v. Stackhouse*, 9 Barr, 186; *Farmers' Ins. Co. v. Blair*, 82 Penn. St. 33; *Ramsey v. McCue*, 21 Grat. 349; *Johnson v. McGahee*, 1 Ala. 186; *McCormick v. Fitzmorris*, 39 Mo. 24; *Munroe v. Eastman*, 31 Mich. 283; *Page v. Danaher*, 43 Wis. 221; *North v. Henneberry*, 44 Wis. 306; *Muckleroy v. Bethany*, 27 Tex. 551; as to presumptions in such cases, see Wh. on Ev. §§ 621-9, 1313.

³ *Infra*, § 700; *Knight v. Clements*, 8 Ad. & El. 215; *Hills v. Barnes*, 11 N. H. 395; *Humphreys v. Guillow*, 13 N. H. 385; *Simpson v. Stackhouse*, 9 Barr, 186; *Davis v. Carlisle*, 6 Ala. 707; *Commer. Bk. v. Lum*, 7 How. (Miss.) 414; see *Clifford v. Parker*, 2 M. & G. 909; *Cariss v. Tattersall*, 2 M. & G. 890; *Taylor v. Moseley*, 6 C. & P. 273; *Gardner v. Walsh*, 5 E. & B. 83. The Roman law, assuming that a party would not be likely to sign a dispositive document containing important interlineations and corrections without an explanatory memorandum, before signature, throws on the party producing such a document the burden of proving

tion of altered negotiable paper is denied, and the alteration on its face is suspicious, the burden is on the plaintiff to prove the paper was executed after the alteration, or that the alteration was agreed to by the defendant¹ Whether the proof shows that the alteration was made before execution of the document, or whether, if made afterwards, it was made with the consent of the other party, is a question of fact, to be determined by all the circumstances of the case, unfettered by any presumption of law. The burden of proof of explaining the alteration, if material, is, as has been seen, on the party producing the document; but this is because he is the actor in the matter, and not because there is any presumption of law against him. The question is one purely of fact, to be determined by preponderance of proof.² The question is, what

that such interlineations or corrections were made before signature. If, however, a right is rested on a supposed nullity, and the plaintiff claims upon the document as it stands, without such corrections, and the defendant pleads that such corrections are genuine and valid, the prevailing opinion is that if the corrections impart a new sense to the document, and are not on their face the introduction of casually omitted words, they may, *prima facie*, be disregarded. In such case the burden is on the party relying on them to prove their validity.¹

¹ *Infra*, § 700; *Wilde v. Armsby*, 6 Cush. 314; *Morris v. Bowman*, 12 Gray, 467; *Simpson v. Davis*, 119 Mass. 270; see *Bishop v. Chambre*, M. & M. 116; *Knight v. Clements*, 8 A. & E. 215; *Hill v. Cooley*, 46 Penn. St. 178, and cases cited in *Wh. on Ev.* § 629.

² *Bishop v. Chambre*, M. & M. 116; *Knight v. Clements*, 8 A. & E. 215; *Gooch v. Bryant*, 13 Me. 386; *Beaman v. Russell*, 20 Vt. 205; *Simpson v. Davis*, 119 Mass. 270; *Bailey v. Taylor*,

11 Conn. 531; *Penny v. Corwith*, 18 John. 499; *Nazro v. Fuller*, 24 Wend. 374; *Cumberland Bk. v. Hall*, 1 Halst. 215; *Heffelfinger v. Shutz*, 16 S. & R. 41; *Hudson v. Reel*, 5 Barr, 279; *Hill v. Cooley*, 46 Penn. St. 178; *Wickes v. Caulk*, 5 Har. & J. 36; *Wilson v. Henderson*, 9 Sm. & M. 375; though see *Chesley v. Frost*, 1 N. H. 145.

In a learned opinion by the supreme court of Kansas in 1880, it is said that on the question of the burden of proof in such cases there are the four following distinct theories: "First, that an alteration apparent on the face of the writing raises no presumption either way, but the question is for the jury; second, that it raises a presumption against the writing, and requires therefore some explanation to render it admissible; third, that it raises such a presumption when it is suspicious, otherwise not; fourth, that it is presumed, in the absence of explanation, to have been made before delivery, and therefore requires no explanation in the first instance. It is impossible," it is further said, "to fix a cast-iron rule

¹ *Wh. on Ev.* § 621.

does the document itself show? If, on the one hand, the alteration is on its face trivial, it cannot of itself exclude the document from being admitted in evidence. If, on the other hand, the alteration is material, and of a suspicious character, it should be explained before the document is admitted in evidence.¹—Whether an *erasure* throws the burden of explanation on the party producing a document depends upon the character of the document. It would be very strange if a deed, engrossed and executed with great apparent precision, should contain erasures unnoticed in the attestation; and erasures thus unnoticed ought to be explained. It is otherwise with fragmentary memoranda and with papers not, from the nature of the case, carefully prepared.²

§ 699. The party to whose disparagement the alteration is made may sue on the contract, supposing its meaning can be ascertained and proved, to the same effect as if it had been lost or destroyed.³ He is entitled to prove what the document was before it was tam-

Adverse
parties not
to be prej-
udiced by
alteration.

to control in all cases; but certainly the second rule, and the one contended for by plaintiff in error, is not the true one. Clearly, in ordinary cases the alteration ought not to raise a presumption against the instrument, because the law never presumes wrong. The question as to time of the alteration is, in the last instance, one for the jury. It is, like any other fact in the case, to be settled by the trier or triers of the facts. Generally, the instrument should be given in evidence, and in a jury case should go to the jury, upon ordinary proof of its execution, leaving the parties to such explanatory evidence of the alteration as they may choose to offer. If there is neither intrinsic nor extrinsic evidence as to when the alteration was made, it is to be presumed, if any presumption is said to exist, that the alteration was made before or at the time of the execution of the instrument. Perhaps there might be cases where the alteration is attended with such manifest circum-

stances of suspicion that the court might refuse to allow the instrument to go before the jury until some explanation; but this case is not of that character." *Neil v. Case*, 25 Kan. 510; to this are cited *Davis v. Jenney*, 1 Metc. 221; *Hayden v. Goodnow*, 39 Conn. 164; *Hunt v. Gray*, 35 N. J. 227; *White v. Hass*, 32 Ala. 431; *Paramore v. Lindsay*, 63 Mo. 63; *First Nat. Bank v. Franklin*, 20 Kan. 264.

¹ In *Whittlesey v. Frantz*, 74 N. Y. 456, the plaintiff relied on a stock subscription; and the paper put in evidence showed the name of a prior subscriber cancelled by lines drawn through it, and opposite to the name was written "By agree't, Mar. 5, '73," this date being subsequent to the defendant's subscription. It was held that though this alteration was unexplained at the trial, it did not by itself discharge the defendant.

² *Tyree v. Rives*, 57 Ala. 173.

³ Wh. on Ev. §§ 625 *et seq.*; *Leake*, 2d ed. 810.

pered with, since the failure to produce the original is imputable to the misconduct, not of himself, but of the opposing party.¹ If there is doubt as to the meaning, the sense less favorable to the spoliator is to be taken.² On the same reasoning, a party is not affected by alterations made without his connivance by a stranger,³ though against such stranger the presumption against spoliation does not work if it appear that the alteration was made inadvertently.

§ 700. As against a non-agreeing party, negotiable paper is avoided by any alterations tending to vary its effect, and this though the alteration was made before the paper came into the holder's hands.⁴ As having this effect, and thus avoiding the paper, is the alteration of the date;⁵ changing time of payment;⁶ changing the place of payment;⁷ inserting a place of payment in a blank;⁸ adding or varying terms as to interest;⁹ altering the medium of payment;¹⁰ adding a seal;¹¹ inserting a fixed rate of exchange;¹²

Rule as to negotiable paper.

¹ *Pattinson v. Luckley*, L. R. 10 Ex. 330.

² *Wh. on Ev.* §§ 1265 *et seq.*

³ *Infra*, § 702.

⁴ *Outhwaite v. Luntley*, 4 Camp. 179; *Wood v. Steele*, 6 Wall. 80; *Martendale v. Follett*, 1 N. H. 95. It should be remembered that the English cases to this effect are under the stamp act, and that alterations of a note after stamping may be regarded as conflicting with the act. But, aside from the stamp act, the principle in the text is good.

⁵ *Master v. Miller*, 4 T. R. 320; *Hirschman v. Budd*, L. R. 8 Ex. 171, qualifying *Parry v. Nicholson*, 13 M. & W. 778; *Walton v. Hastings*, 4 Camp. 223; *Cardwell v. Martin*, 9 East, 190; *Wood v. Steele*, 6 Wall. 80; *Stephens v. Graham*, 7 S. & R. 505; *Britton v. Dierker*, 46 Mo. 591. In *Vance v. Lowther*, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 176, a cheque payable to bearer on demand was held avoided by a change of date made by an agent of the payee. See *Leake*, 2d ed 809.

⁶ *Bowman v. Nichol*, 5 T. R. 537; *Bathe v. Taylor*, 15 East, 412; *Miller v. Gilleland*, 19 Penn. St. 119; *Lewis v. Kramer*, 3 Md. 265.

⁷ *Tidmarsh v. Grover*, 1 M. & S. 735; *Southwark Bk. v. Gross*, 35 Penn. St. 80.

⁸ *Burchfield v. Moore*, 3 E. & B. 683; *Calvert v. Baker*, 4 M. & W. 417; *Crotty v. Hodges*, 4 M. & G. 561; *Toomer v. Rutland*, 57 Ala. 379.

⁹ *Warrington v. Early*, 2 E. & B. 763; *Waterman v. Vose*, 43 Me. 504; *Lee v. Starbird*, 55 Me. 491; *Fay v. Smith*, 1 Allen, 477; *McGrath v. Clark*, 56 N. Y. 34; *Neff v. Horner*, 63 Penn. St. 327; *Fulmer v. Seitz*, 68 Penn. St. 237; *Patterson v. McNeely*, 16 Oh. St. 348; *Locknane v. Emmerson*, 11 Bush, 69; *Darwin v. Rippey*, 63 N. C. 318; *Glover v. Robbins*, 49 Ala. 219; *Lamar v. Brown*, 56 Ala. 157.

¹⁰ *Dan. on Neg. Inst.* § 1349; *Martendale v. Follett*, 1 N. H. 95; *Stephens v. Graham*, 7 S. & R. 505; *Darwin v. Rippey*, 63 N. C. 318.

¹¹ *Eddy v. Bond*, 19 Me. 461.

¹² *Hirschfield v. Smith*, L. R. 1 C. P. 340.

changing "order" to "bearer;"¹ interlining "jointly and severally" before the names of the makers of a joint note;² adding an additional maker's name to a joint and several note;³ materially changing the relations of the parties;⁴ and cutting off or erasing a signature of a party to a joint and several note.⁵ It is otherwise, however, with entries which it was understood by the parties that the holder was at liberty to make, or which are only cumulative, as adding the words "on demand" when the note fixed no time for payment.⁶—An indorsee taking from an indorser whose title is vitiated by tampering with the paper is in no better position than the party from whom he takes. His only remedy is against the party from whom he took the paper, from whom he may recover the consideration paid.⁷ The party making the alteration, however, cannot recover even the consideration from his immediate indorser, because he has destroyed the remedies of the latter against prior parties; "by altering the bill in a material part he makes it his own as against the prior parties, and causes it to operate as a satisfaction of the debt for which it was originally given."⁸—An unindorsed bill for value, it should be remembered, is not complete until it is accepted and returned to the payee;⁹ and an accommodation bill is not in this sense complete, and, so far as concerns con-

¹ Union Nat. Bk. v. Roberts, 45 Wis. 373.

² Perring v. Hone, 4 Bing. 28; 12 Moore, 135; 2 C. & P. 401.

³ Gardner v. Walsh, 5 E. & B. 83; Wallace v. Jewell, 21 Oh. St. 163; Lunt v. Silver, 5 Mo. Ap. 186. But see, *contra*, McVean v. Scott, 46 Barb. 379; McCaughey v. Smith, 27 N. Y. 39; Miller v. Finley, 26 Mich. 249; see 2 Dan. on Neg. Int. § 1388.

⁴ Knill v. Williams, 10 East, 431; see Miller v. Reed, 27 Penn. St. 244.

⁵ Mason v. Bradley, 11 M. & W. 593; see Mahaim Bank v. Douglass, 31 Conn. 170; Davis v. Coleman, 7 Ired. 424.

⁶ Aldous v. Cornwell, L. R. 3 Q. B. 573; see Langdon v. Paul, 20 Vt. 217;

Granite R. R. v. Bacon, 15 Pick. 239.

Clower v. Wynn, 59 Ga. 246. As to filling blanks, see *supra*, § 204. As to alterations by consent, see Myers v. Nell, 84 Penn. St. 369.

⁷ Leake, 2d ed. 811; Burchfield v. Moore, 3 E. & B. 683; Vance v. Lowther, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 176.

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 811, citing Alderson v. Langdale, 3 B. & Ad. 663. A memorandum on the back of a promissory note, noting that, after a specific date, the interest on the note will be reduced, is not an alteration of the note, and does not discharge a surety of the maker. Cambridge Savings Bank v. Hyde, 131 Mass. 77.

⁹ Wh. on Ev. § 626; Sherrington v. Jermyn, 3 C. & P. 374.

senting parties, may be altered, even under the English stamp act, until it is in the hands of some person entitled to recover on it.¹—It should also be kept in mind that a party who draws a note or check so carelessly that blanks in it can be filled up, or other alterations made in it without erasure, may make himself liable to *bona fide* holders for value.²

§ 701. Policies of insurance have been held to be avoided by alterations, in the hands of the insured, changing the port of destination,³ or the time of sailing,⁴ or the description of the thing insured, so as to enlarge the insurer's liabilities.⁵ But the introduction of a harmless piece of surplusage, inserted by the insured from ignorance merely as indicating his sense of the instrument, has been held not to avoid.⁶

Rule as to
policies of
insurance.

§ 702. Even though the alteration be made by a stranger, it precludes the custodian from benefiting by the contract if the alteration were in his favor.⁷ "A party who has the custody of an instrument made for his benefit is bound to preserve it in its original state."⁸ The possession of an agent is in this respect to be regarded as the possession of the principal.⁹ But it is otherwise when the alteration was made without any connivance or inculpatory negligence on the part of the custodian, and where the true meaning can be shown by extrinsic proof.¹⁰ For the old rule, that an alteration by a stranger invalidates a document,¹¹ no

Alteration
by stranger
does not
vitiate.

¹ Tarleton v. Shingler, 7 C. B. 812.

² Garrard v. Haddan, 67 Penn. St. 82; Zimmermann v. Rote, 75 Penn. St. 191; Brown v. Reed, 79 Penn. St. 370; see Bigelow on Estoppel, 3d ed. 530, 543-4. As to filling blanks, see *supra*, §§ 185, 204.

³ Campbell v. Christie, 2 Stark. 64.

⁴ Fairlie v. Christie, 7 Taunt. 416.

⁵ Langhorn v. Cologan, 4 Taunt. 330.

⁶ Sanderson v. Symonds, 1 B. & B. 426.

⁷ Pigot's case, 11 Co. 27 b; Davidson v. Cooper, 13 M. & W. 343.

⁸ Per cur. Davidson v. Cooper, 13 M.

& W. 352; Burchfield v. Moore, 3 E. & B. 687, adopted in Leake, 2d ed. 806.

⁹ Patterson v. Luckley, L. R. 10 Ex. 330; Bank of Hindustan v. Smith, 36 L. J. C. P. 241.

¹⁰ Henfree v. Bromley, 6 East, 309; Boston v. Benson, 12 Cush. 61; Nichols v. Johnson, 10 Conn. 192; Lewis v. Payn, 8 Cow. 71; Jackson v. Malin, 15 Johns. 293; Rees v. Overbaugh, 6 Cow. 746; Lee v. Alexander, 9 B. Mon. 25; Davis v. Carlisle, 6 Ala. 707; Union Nat. Bk. v. Roberts, 45 Wis. 373.

¹¹ Pigot's case, 11 Co. 27 b. See Davidson v. Cooper, 13 M. & W. 778.

longer obtains in cases in which altered or defaced passages can be restored by extrinsic proof.¹

§ 703. What has been said applies to intentional alterations.

So as to accidental alteration. An accidental alteration does not invalidate, for if it did, few old deeds would be valid, since there are few old deeds which are not affected by the lapse of time. Hence, that a seal has been accidentally torn off, or has lost its impress, does not invalidate;² nor does the cancelling of an acceptance by mistake;³ nor the striking off an endorsement by mistake.⁴

§ 704. An alteration of a deed, however disadvantageously it may affect the party making or permitting it in respect to his right to use it as an executory contract, does not divest any title already vested in conformity with its provisions.⁵ Rights which the deed established cannot be divested by its subsequent alteration; and property vested under an executed contract of sale cannot be recovered back because the contract has been subsequently tampered with. The contract, after alteration, cannot be enforced in favor of the party responsible for the alteration; but the mere fact of the alteration does not operate so as to impair his title to property passing to him by it before the alteration.⁶

§ 705. Whether an alteration by consent is simply a correcting of the original contract, being absorbed in it, or starts a new contract, may be a question of some moment, not merely in reference to the English stamp acts, but in reference to the statute of limitations, to the applicatory local law, and to the statute of frauds.⁷ The distinction that underlies the cases is this: When the object of the alteration is simply to clear

¹ *Hutchins v. Scott*, 2 M. & W. 814; *U. S. v. Spalding*, 2 Mason, 482; *Broadwell v. Stiles*, 3 Halst. 58; *Marshall v. Gouglar*, 10 S. & R. 164; *State v. Berg*, 50 Ind. 496.

² *Sandilands in re*, L. R. 6 C. P. 411; *Argoll v. Cheney*, Palm. 403; *Bolton v. Carlisle*, 2 H. Bl. 263.

³ *Novelli v. Rossi*, 2 B. & Ad. 757.

⁴ *Wilkinson v. Johnson*, 3 B. & C. 428.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 812; *Bolton v. Bp. of Carlisle*, 2 H. Bl. 259; *West v. Steward*, 14 M. & W. 47; *Ward v. Lumley*, 5 H. & N. 656.

⁶ *Green v. Attenborough*, 3 H. & C. 468; *Shaw ex parte*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 463.

⁷ As to novation, see *infra*, §§ 852 et seq.

an obscurity, to fill a blank, to remove a blot, or to correct a mistake of figures, the original instrument is to be regarded as continuing in form, and the alterations as absorbed in it.¹ In other words, when the object of the alteration is to bring out the real intention of the parties at the time the original contract was executed, then the original contract remains.² But when the object of the alteration is to give effect to a change of intention subsequent to the execution of the original contract, then a new contract is started.³

¹ *Jacob v. Hart*, 6 M. & S. 142; *Byrom v. Thompson*, 11 A. & E. 31; *Hamelin v. Bruck*, 9 Q. B. 306.

² *Sutton v. Toomer*, 7 B. & C. 416; *Jacob v. Hart*, 6 M. & S. 142; *Hamelin v. Bruck*, 9 Q. B. 306; *Robinson v. Touvay*, 1 M. & S. 217; *Byrom v. Thompson*, 11 Ad. & E. 31; *Bluck v. Gompertz*, 7 Ex. 862.

³ *Bowman v. Nichol*, 5 T. R. 537; *Sutton v. Toomer*, 7 B. & C. 416; *Hill v. Patten*, 8 East, 373; *Knill v. Williams*, 10 East, 431; *Carr v. Petroleum Co.*, L. R. 1 C. P. 636; *Briggs v. R. R.*, 31 Vt. 211; *Vicary v. Moore*, 2 Watts, 451. See *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXII.

IMPLIED CONTRACTS FOR SALE AND SERVICE.

Proposal and acceptance may be inferred from the facts of the case, but not to contradict written contracts, § 707.

From employment of labor, sale of goods, and bailment, § 708.

And from course of business and usage, § 709.

Proposal to guarantee involves promise to pay, § 710.

Implied promise may be raised when express is bad under statute of frauds or otherwise defective, § 711.

When, after partial delivery of goods, final delivery is prevented, vendor may sue on *indebitatus* count, § 712.

Otherwise when there is to be no payment except for aggregate, § 713.

When completion of work is prevented

by accident, *quantum meruit* may lie, § 714.

Contracts of common carriage dependent on completion, § 715.

When service is broken into by employer, back wages or damages may be recovered, § 716.

But not when this is act of employee, § 717.

Term of service dependent on circumstances, § 718.

Special promise to pay not to be implied in cases of friendly and family service, § 719.

Nor when there is a stated salary or other fixed compensation, § 720.

Vendee taking land may agree to pay burdens, § 721.

§ 707. HERETOFORE we have been mainly occupied with contracts which are either written or spoken in words on both sides capable of being definitely reproduced. A large part of business, however, is done much more informally. The contract is implied from conduct; and this in ways so multitudinous that their enumeration would be impracticable. To all of them proposal and acceptance are requisite, as otherwise there would be no contract.¹ Sometimes, however, the proposal is implied from the facts of the case; sometimes the acceptance; sometimes both.² And this implication may be from the acts of the parties, from their prior dealing, and from custom. When, however, there is established an ex-

¹ See, however, on this point, *supra*, § 8.

² See *supra*, § 6.

press and formal contractual relation, this is to control, and it cannot be set aside and an implied contract put in its place. "There is no room for an implied contract where an express contract exists."¹ "As the law will not imply a promise, where there is an express promise, so the law will not imply a promise of any person against his express declaration; because such declaration is repugnant to any implication of a promise."² It is true, as we will see,³ when an express contract is invalid under the statute of frauds, or for other technical reasons, the substance of the contract may form the basis of a *quantum meruit*. But this is in subordination to the express contract, not in variance from it. There can be no implication in conflict with what is expressed.⁴ It is otherwise, however, as to informal memoranda and ambiguous terms whose meaning may be brought out by parol.⁵

§ 708. "When a defendant has actually received the consideration of an agreement by a voluntary performance of an act by the other party, upon his proposition and suggestion, such performance constitutes a consideration which will uphold the defendant's promise."⁶ Among the acts from which indebtedness is to be thus implied, the first to be noticed is that of employment of labor.⁷ "If I employ a person to transact any business for me or perform any work, the law implies that I undertook or assumed to pay him so much as his labor deserved. And if I neglect to make him amends, he has his remedy for this injury by bringing his action on the case upon this implied *assumpsit*. But this valuation of his trouble is submitted to the determination of a jury, who will assess

From employment of labor, sale of goods, and bailment.

¹ Met. on Con. 6; Whiting v. Sullivan, 7 Mass. 107; Massachusetts General Hosp. v. Fairbanks, 129 Mass. 78. ford, 95 U. S. 474; Weston v. Davis, 24 Me. 374; Worthen v. Stevens, 4 Mass. 448.

² Lord, J., Earle v. Coburn, 130 Mass. 596, citing Whiting v. Sullivan, 7 Mass. 107.

³ *Infra*, § 711.

⁴ 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 89; Cutter v. Powell, 6 T. R. 320; Read v. Rann, 10 B. & C. 438; Van Ness v. Washington, 4 Pet. 232; Gavinzel v. Crump, 22 Wall. 308; Brown v. Spof-

⁵ *Infra*, § 941.

⁶ Andrews, J., Marie v. Garrison, 83 N. Y. 27; citing Sands v. Crooke, 46 N. Y. 564; Morton v. Burn, 7 Ad. & El. 25; Storm v. U. States, 94 U. S. 83. That a contract may be by conduct. see § 86-7.

⁷ Swires v. Parsons, 5 W. & S. 557; Neil v. Gilmore, 79 Penn. St. 421.

such a sum in damages as they think he really merited. This is called *assumpsit* on a *quantum meruit*.—There is also an implied *assumpsit* on a *quantum valebat*, which is very similar to the former, being only where one takes up goods or wares of a tradesman without expressly agreeing for the price. There the law concludes that both parties did intentionally agree that the real value of the goods shall be paid; and an action on the case may be brought accordingly, if the vendee refuses to pay that value.”¹ The same principle applies where one party pays money for another party at the latter’s request; repayment being thereby impliedly promised.² There must, however, be a contractual relation, express or implied, between the parties.³ Thus the employment of a husband on a farm does not involve an implied employment of his wife to do the housework.⁴ Generally, in all cases where goods or labor are ordered, a money indebtedness is implied to the party to whom the price is payable from the party who has had the benefit of the goods or labor.⁵ For this purpose the plaintiff is entitled to sue on an *indebitatus* count, as for a claim for money payable “for goods sold and delivered,” or “for goods bargained and sold,” or “for work and labor done;” “reserving the particular circumstances of the debt, if disputed, to be given in evidence.”⁶ “The principle on which

¹ 3 Black. Com. 162, adopted by Leake, 2d ed. 73; *Lampleigh v. Brathwait*, Hobart, 105; 1 Smith L. C. 7th Am. ed. 280; *Jewry v. Busk*, 5 Taunt. 302; *Allen v. Woodward*, 2 Fost. N. H. 544; *Downs v. Marsh*, 29 Conn. 409; *Comstock v. Smith*, 7 Johns. 87; *Oatfield v. Waring*, 14 Johns. 188.

² *Infra*, §§ 757 *et seq.*; *Brittain v. Lloyd*, 14 M. & W. 762; *Lewis v. Campbell*, 8 C. B. 541; *infra*, § 757. As to promises on executed considerations, see *supra*, § 514. As contract implied from acceptance of service or goods, see *supra*, § 7. As to partial failure of consideration, see *supra*, § 520; *infra*, §§ 745 *et seq.*; and see *Leach v. French*, 69 Me. 389.

³ *Infra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

⁴ *Lyle v. Gray*, 47 Iowa, 153.

⁵ *Supra*, § 6; *Phillips v. Jones*, 1 A. & E. 333; *Goslin v. Hodson*, 24 Vt. 140; *James v. Bixby*, 11 Mass. 34; *Day v. Caton*, 119 Mass. 513; *Peter v. Steel*, 3 Yeates, 250; *Moreland v. Davidson*, 71 Penn. St. 371; *Dougherty v. Whitehead*, 31 Mo. 255.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 63; citing 2 Wms. Saun. 349 b; *Streeter v. Horlock*, 1 Bing. 34, 37; *Stone v. Rogers*, 2 M. & W. 443; see *Hastings v. Pepper*, 11 Pick. 41; *Badger v. Titcomb*, 15 Pick. 414; *Knight v. Worsted Co.*, 2 Cush. 286; *Maghee v. R. R.*, 45 N. Y. 514; *Humphreys v. Reed*, 6 Whart. 435.

the cases have been decided, as to the proper mode of declaring where the original contract has been executory, but the period of credit has expired or the condition has been performed, is not that the law alters the mode of declaring on the original contract, and states it not according to the fact, but that it conclusively infers that simple contract to pay the price for goods sold and delivered, which would arise upon the facts of a sale and delivery without any special circumstances accompanying them. He who seeks to disturb that inference must not content himself with merely showing conditions or other special provisions forming part of the contract at the time of its being entered into; he must show them in existence and operation at the time of the action brought; if not, they may be struck out of the consideration, and the contract treated as if originally simple, unconditional, and executed."¹ But mere reception of goods does not establish a liability to pay for them.²—What has been said applies with equal force to contracts for service.—As has been already seen,³ when work of a character for which it is the usual practice to pay as a matter of business, is done for a person who stands by and receives the benefit, then a proposal and acceptance will be inferred.⁴ "If the plaintiff's services were worthless, or were of no value, he

¹ Per cur. in *Beverley v. Lincoln*, 6 A. & E. 836; cited in *Leake*, 2d ed. 64. Mr. Leake, also, cites *Clark v. Bulmer*, 11 M. & W. 243, where the court said:

"Whenever a simple contract is executed, and terminates in a debt which it is the duty of the defendant to pay *instantly*, it is no doubt the subject of an *indebitatus* count; but the executed contract must be described properly;" and see *Tripp v. Armitage*, 4 M. & W. 687; and for other cases, *supra*, § 6.

² *Supra*, § 22. "In *Boston Ice Co. v. Potter*, 123 Mass. 28, the court refused to hold the defendant to an implied promise to pay for ice which he had received and consumed during a year or more; and this upon the ground that a promise will not necessarily be implied from the mere fact of

receiving a benefit." Lord, J., *Earle v. Coburn*, 130 Mass. 597. As to rescinded sales, see *supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 752.

³ *Supra*, § 7.

⁴ *Paynter v. Williams*, 1 C. & M. 810; *Lucas v. Godwin*, 3 Bing. N. C. 737; *Phillips v. Jones*, 1 A. & E. 333; *Smith v. Chance*, 2 B. & Ald. 755; *Pegge v. Lampeter Union*, L. R. 9 C. P. 373; *Abbot v. Hermon*, 7 Greenl. 121; *Derby v. Johnson*, 21 Vt. 17; *Farmington Academy v. Allen*, 14 Mass. 172; *Lowe v. Pimental*, 115 Mass. 44; *Day v. Caton*, 119 Mass. 513; *Clark v. Marsiglie*, 1 Denio, 317; *Hall v. Rupley*, 10 Barr, 231; *Stropes v. Board*, 72 Ind. 42; *Smith v. Morse*, 20 La. An. 220.

is not entitled to recover anything, but if they were of value, he is entitled to recover that value."¹ But there must be a definite acceptance to bind; mere non-refusal does not suffice.² And to establish special remuneration, a special contract must be proved. Thus, from the mere fact of employing an attorney, a client cannot be held bound to pay such attorney a special retaining fee.³—Contracts of bailment stand on the same footing.—To sustain an action for use and occupation, "it is not necessary for the plaintiff to prove an express contract with the tenant when he took possession, or any particular reservation of rent, nor that the tenant has once paid rent, for an undertaking to that effect will be implied in all cases where a permissive holding is established."⁴ "When the defendant has entered and occupied by permission of the

¹ *Cole v. Clarke*, 3 Wis. 323; *Jackson v. Cleveland*, 15 Wis. 108; *McCormick v. Ketchum*, 48 Wis. 646.

² *Supra*, § 22.

³ *McClellan v. Hayford*, Sup. Ct. Me. 1881. In this case, Burrows, J., said: "The jury must have understood from this that proof of the employment of the plaintiff as counsel would of itself, as matter of law, raise an implied promise on the part of the defendant to pay any reasonable sum which the plaintiff might charge as a retaining fee in all the contested cases, besides making compensation for all the services actually rendered; that something was due and recoverable as and for a retaining fee, in addition to the pay for services and disbursements in each contested case, and that the only question for them was, whether the sum charged was a reasonable sum to charge for a retainer. In support of the instructions, the plaintiff relies upon the cases of *Aldrich v. Brown*, 103 Mass. 527; *Perry v. Lord*, 111 ib. 504; *Pierce v. Parker*, 121 ib. 403; and *Eggleston v. Boardman*, 37 Mich. 14. But neither of these cases nor all of them combined can be regarded as

authority for the instruction here complained of. The circumstances under which a contract to pay a counsellor at law for services rendered and expenses incurred may be inferred, and the character and effect of the contract, do not essentially differ from those which pertain to and regulate contracts for other professional services, skilled labor of any kind, and, in fact, any kind of service in which the amount of the compensation necessarily depends largely upon the circumstances under which the service is rendered, its nature, and the charges that are usual and customary for like services. Hence, in the absence of a special contract to pay these retainers, the plaintiff must prove enough to show that there was an implied promise on the part of the defendant to pay them."

As will be hereafter seen, there can be no recovery for services rendered as a matter of courtesy or of family service. *Infra*, § 719.

⁴ *Taylor*, Land. and Ten. § 655, adopted by *Wallace, J.*, *Cobb v. Kidd*, 12 Rep. 769.

plaintiff without any express contract, the law implies a promise on his part to make compensation, or pay a reasonable rent for his occupation."¹—A contract, however, as we have just seen, will not be implied when there is an express contract covering the same subject matter between the parties. Nor will a contract be implied when the alleged promisee has entered into contractual relations with a third party for payment.—“If A. contract with B. to furnish board at his expense to fifty men in his employ, and B. furnishes it, there is no implied contract on the part of the boarders to pay each for his own board. And this, not because they are employed by A., but because the board was furnished on A.'s promise to pay for it.”²

§ 709. When there is an established course of business between two parties, then services rendered by one to the other may be regarded as made subject to the general engagement previously instituted.³ Thus, a specific proposal and acceptance will be inferred where an agent makes disbursements incidental to the due discharge of his agency, though not distinctively requested.⁴—A proposal and acceptance, also, may be implied from usage, supposing that the parties place themselves within the operation of such usage.⁵ Thus, the particular kind of credit given by a shipwright for the repairs of a ship will be determined by the local usage to which the parties subjected themselves.⁶ And the limit of the contract of brokerage is thus determined,⁷ and so of other mercantile agencies.⁸ But

Proposal and acceptance implied from course of business and usage.

¹ Strong, J., *Carpenter v. U. S.*, 17 519; *Powell v. Newburgh*, 19 Johns. Wal. 489. R. 284; *Wynkoop v. Seal*, 64 Penn. St. 361.

² Soule, J., *Mass. Gen. Hosp. v. Fairbanks*, 129 Mass. 81.

³ See Wh. on Ev. §§ 962 *et seq.*; *supra*, §§ 6, 7.

⁴ *Supra*, § 653; Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 81 *et seq.*; *Rogers v. Price*, 3 Y. & J. 28; *Wiltshire v. Sims*, 1 Camp. 258; *Bruce v. Hunter*, 3 Camp. 467; *Eaton v. Bell*, 5 B. & Ald. 34; *Calton v. Bragg*, 15 East, 223.

⁵ *Raitt v. Mitchell*, 4 Camp. 146.

⁷ Wh. on Ag. §§ 134, 696; Wh. on Ev. § 968; *Sutton v. Tatham*, 10 A. & E. 27; *Farnsworth v. Hemmer*, 1 Allen, 494.

⁶ Wh. on Ag. § 311; *Bayley v. Wilkins*, 7 C. B. 886; *Smith v. Lindo*, 5 C. B. N. S. 587; *Colley v. Merrill*, 6 Greenl. 50; *Stocking v. Sage*, 1 Conn.

⁸ *Young v. Cole*, 3 Bing. N. C. 724; *Graves v. Legg*, 2 H. & N. 210; *Schuchardt v. Allen*, 1 Wall. 359; *Randall v. Kehler*, 60 Me. 37; *Day v. Holmes*,

a usage, to be thus recognized, must be reasonable and consistent with the policy of the law.¹ Nor can it be introduced to establish a contract when there is no contractual relation. Its object is to elucidate what exists, not to create that which previously had no existence.² Thus, in a case in Maryland in 1880, it was held that an executor could not be made liable, on the ground of usage, for provisions furnished to persons attending the deceased's funeral.³

§ 710. Under this head may be ranked contracts of guar-
 anty and indemnity. "If you will employ A., I
 Proposal to guaranty will guarantee his good conduct," or "I will in-
 involves demnify you for any loss," or "if you will sell A.
 promise to pay. certain goods, I will answer for his paying." In
 each of these cases there is a conditional proposal which is

103 Mass. 306; Wh. on Ev. § 967; Smith v. Tracy, 36 N. Y. 79; Baker v. Drake, 66 N. Y. 518; Benners v. Clemens, 58 Penn. St. 24; Frank v. Jenkins, 22 Oh. St. 597.

¹ Farnsworth v. Hemmer, 1 Allen, 494; Snelling v. Hall, 107 Mass. 138; Evans v. Waln, 71 Penn. St. 69.

² Wh. on Ev. §§ 965 *et seq.*, and cases there cited.

³ "On the day of the funeral," so runs the opinion of the court, "the body was taken to a church some five miles distant for interment, and after the funeral services were over and the body buried, the plaintiff (with whom the deceased had lived and at whose house he died) caused an invitation to be given to those present to repair to his house for dinner; and the proof shows that some seventy or eighty persons accepted the invitation and dined with the plaintiff, and that twenty-five or thirty horses, of parties so dining, were also fed by the plaintiff. It nowhere appears that this entertainment was provided at the instance or request of the defendant; but it seems to have been the unsolicited and voluntary act of the plaintiff. The charge is sought

to be maintained by what is said to be a custom in the neighborhood. If custom could enter into the matter, and shape the claim of the plaintiff, that custom, if allowed to be uniform in operation, would, to a large extent, control the discretion of the orphans' court, without respect to the condition and circumstances of the deceased. If custom could authorize the giving of funeral dinners at the expense of the estate of the deceased, the allowance therefor would be proper, whether the estate proved to be solvent or insolvent, or whether the number of persons attending them be eighty or five hundred, or even more. Such entertainments are not the ordinary, and certainly not the necessary, incidents of funerals, nor are they within the contemplation of the law which provides for the allowance of reasonable funeral expenses, having reference to the condition and circumstances of the deceased. Those who think proper to furnish such entertainments must do so from motives of hospitality, and not with design of charging the estate of the deceased." *Shaeffer v. Shaeffer*, 54 Md. 679.

accepted when A. is employed, or when the goods are delivered to A.¹ Until this acceptance, and notice thereof when this is required, the contract is not complete, and has no binding effect.² A proposal to a creditor to forbear may take this conditional type. "If you will not press your claim, I will save you harmless." The forbearance, with notice to the party making the proposal, establishes the contract between him and the creditor forbearing, and a term of the contract is the promise to pay.³

§ 711. If a contract of sale is inoperative under the statute of frauds, but the consideration has been received, the party receiving can be sued on a *quantum meruit*. The vendee has received the goods, and a proposal and acceptance will be implied. And the same rule applies to other contracts void under the statute of frauds, where an express contract is void because it was not engrossed in a way the statute of frauds prescribes.⁴ A similar distinction is applicable to an infant's contracts for labor,⁵ and to champertous contracts.⁶ It has also been held that where a contract for labor is defective from having been made on Sunday, the employee can recover on a *quantum meruit*.⁷

Implied promise may be raised when express contract is bad under statute of frauds or otherwise.

§ 712. We have already seen⁸ that, when payment of goods is conditioned on delivery, delivery is a condition precedent; and that delivery of successive instal-

When after partial delivery, final

¹ *Kennaway v. Treleavan*, 5 M. & W. 501. When guarantors and indemnifiers are entitled to notice of acceptance, see *supra*, § 570.

² *Supra*, § 17; *Offord v. Davies*, 12 C. B. N. S. 748; *Westhead v. Sproson*, 6 H. & N. 728; see *Phillips v. Foxall*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 666.

³ *Supra*, §§ 532, 570 *et seq.*; *Morton v. Burn*, 7 A. & E. 19; *Wilby v. Elgee*, L. R. 10 C. P. 497; see *Phillips v. Foxall*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 666; *Burgess v. Eve*, L. R. 13 Eq. 450; *Chapin v. Lapham*, 20 Pick. 467; *Gibson v. Rennie*, 19 Wend. 389; *Ward v. Fryer*, 19 Wend. 494; *Parmelee v. Thompson*, 45 N. Y. 58.

⁴ *Mavor v. Pyne*, 3 Bing. 285; *Morton v. Tibbett*, 15 Q. B. 434; *Bayley v. Rimmel*, 1 M. & W. 506; *Richards v. Allen*, 17 Me. 296; *Lane v. Shackford*, 5 N. H. 133; *King v. Welcome*, 5 Gray, 41; *Comes v. Lamson*, 16 Conn. 246 (though see *Clark v. Terry*, 25 Conn. 395); *Allen v. Booker*, 2 Stew. 21; *Beaman v. Buck*, 9 Sm. & M. 207; and other cases cited in 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 81; and criticism in 2 Ch. on Cont. *ut supra*, 852.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 42, 51.

⁶ *Supra*, § 427.

⁷ *Supra*, § 382; *Thomas v. Hatch*, 53 Wis. 296.

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 579, 603.

delivery of
goods is
prevented,
vendor
may sue on
indebitatus
count.

ments may be conditioned on discharge of duty as to the first.¹ It is now to be observed that when a contract has been in part performed, but the completion of the performance has been prevented by the action of one of the parties, then the other party may waive the contract as originally settled, and sue on an *indebitatus* count for simply the consideration actually received by the other party.² On a contract, for instance, to sell a thousand tons of coal, if the purchaser prevent the delivery of one-half, but receive the other half, the vendor may maintain at once against the vendee a suit for goods sold and delivered so far as concerns the half received, though by the terms of the contract the sale was to be on a credit as yet unexpired.³ The vendor, in other words, may treat the contract as rescinded, and sue the purchaser as on a new contract for that part of the consideration which has been received, as on a specific assumption of indebtedness. Hence, where a lot of goods were sold on credit on successive deliveries, and after a partial delivery the purchaser refused to receive the remaining instalments, it was held that the vendor might elect to rescind the contract, and sue at once for the goods which had been delivered.⁴ The same principle applies, as we will presently see, to cases where an employee is prevented from com-

¹ *Supra*, § 580.

² *Infra*, § 899; *supra*, §§ 290, 302; Leake, 2d ed. 65; Benj. on Sales, § 690; *Mavor v. Pyne*, 3 Bing. 285; *Planche v. Colburn*, 8 Bing. 14; *Inchbald v. Tea Co.*, 17 C. B. N. S. 733; *Burton v. Pinkerton*, L. R. 2 Ex. 340; *Williams v. Bank*, 2 Pet. 102; *Webb v. Stone*, 24 N. H. 288; *Derby v. Johnson*, 21 Vt. 17; *Webster v. Coffin*, 14 Mass. 196; *Moulton v. Trask*, 9 Met. 577; *Miner v. Bradley*, 22 Pick. 457; *Star Glass Co. v. Morey*, 108 Mass. 570; *Miller v. Ward*, 2 Conn. 494; *Wright v. Barnes*, 14 Conn. 518; *Dubois v. Canal Co.*, 4 Wend. 285; *Hall v. Rupley*, 10 Barr, 231; *Sinnott v. Mullin*, 82 Penn. St. 333; *Jones v.*

Mial, 82 N. C. 252; *Gorman v. Bellamy*, 82 N. C. 496; *McMillan v. Malley*, 10 Neb. 228. For authorities in Roman law, see *supra*, § 603. That the performance of a condition precedent may be waived, see *supra*, § 604.

³ *Supra*, § 579. As to divisibility, see *supra*, §§ 233, 338, 511; *infra*, §§ 897, 899, 901; *Booth v. Tyson*, 15 Vt. 515; *Udike v. Ten Broeck*, 3 Vroom, 105; *Shaw v. Badger*, 12 S. & R. 275.

⁴ *Bartholomew v. Markwick*, 15 C. B. N. S. 711. See generally to the same effect, *Wilkins v. Stevens*, 8 Vt. 214; *McKnight v. Devlin*, 52 N. Y. 399; *Barnwell v. Kempton*, 22 Kan. 314.

pleting his work by a wrongful dismissal by the employer;¹ and to all cases where the party to be benefited releases the other party from performance.² On the other hand, a party who undertakes to deliver to another a particular lot of goods, and who abandons the undertaking before completion, subjects himself to having the whole contract rescinded, and the goods, as far as delivered, thrown back on his hands. If, however, the purchaser holds on to the goods, this may be regarded as starting a new contractual relation between them, making the purchaser liable to the vendor in *indebitatus assumpsit* for the goods actually received.³ Whatever is retained must be paid for, whether the goods retained be in compliance with contract or in excess of contract.⁴

§ 713. It is within the power of the parties to make payment of an employee contingent on completion of work; and if so there can be no claim for payment until the work is complete, although he may claim for damages sustained by a wrongful dismissal.⁵ It must appear, however, from the contract, or from the course of business, that it was intended that, unless the work be completed, there shall be no compensation.⁶ This is usually the case with regard to contracts with real estate agents to buy, sell, or lease, in which case no commissions are due unless the mandate is completed;⁷ and so with regard to other contracts of brokerage.⁸ But if, after a broker has obtained a customer on the employer's terms, the transaction is wantonly broken off by the employer, the broker is entitled

Otherwise when there is to be no payment except for aggregate.

¹ *Infra*, § 716, and see *supra*, §§ 406; *Witherow v. Witherow*, 16 Ohio, 606-7.

² *Supra*, § 602.

³ *Supra*, §§ 520, 601 *et seq.*; *Leake*, 2d ed. 68; *Champion v. Short*, 1 Camp. 53; *Shipton v. Casson*, 5 B. & C. 378; *Oxendale v. Wetherill*, 9 B. & C. 386; *Star Glass Co. v. Morey*, 108 Mass. 570; see *Symonds v. Carr*, 1 Camp. 361; *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 Pen. & W. 63. As dissenting from *Oxendale v. Wetherill*, see *Champlin v. Rowley*, 18 Wend. 187; *Paige v. Ott*, 5 Denio,

238.

⁴ *Hart v. Miles*, 15 M. & W. 85; see *Downer v. Thompson*, 6 Hill, N. Y. 208; *Clark v. Gaylord*, 24 Conn. 484; *Rutgers v. Lucet*, 2 Johns. Cas. 92; *Harlan v. Harlan*, 20 Penn. St. 303. As to distinctive New York rule, see *infra*, § 899.

⁵ *Infra*, § 900, and cases there cited.

⁶ *Cutter v. Powell*, 6 T. R. 320.

⁷ *Bull v. Price*, 7 Bing. 237.

⁸ *Read v. Rann*, 10 B. & C. 438; see *Hamond v. Holiday*, 1 C. & P. 384.

to remuneration *pro tanto*.¹—When there is an agreement, express or implied, for a lumping payment or commission at the end of the service, a party rescinding, supposing him to be entitled to compensation, is restricted to a suit on the *quantum meruit*. But he cannot rescind, and yet claim for damages under the contract.²

§ 714. When the agreement is to do a particular work by the job (*locatio operis*) for a lumping price, and the completion of the work is prevented by *casus*, then usually *indebitatus assumpsit* cannot be maintained for the amount of work actually performed.³ When a tailor, for instance, dies before completing a coat he undertook to make, his representatives cannot sue for the time he spent on it;⁴ when a party orders a set of artificial teeth, but dies before completion, the dentist has no claim against his executors for the partial work done;⁵ and when certain machinery, which is to be paid for as a whole, is destroyed by fire before completion, there can be no recovery for the part of the work done before the fire.⁶ “The plaintiffs, having contracted to do an entire work for a specific sum, can recover nothing unless the work be done, or it can be shown that it was the defendant’s fault that the work was incomplete, or that there is something to justify the conclusion that the parties have entered into a fresh contract.”⁷ It is otherwise, however, when from the contract it appears that the work was to be paid *pro tanto* as it proceeded.⁸ And where

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 67; Prickett v. Badger, 1 C. B. N. S. 296.

² *Supra*, § 603.

³ *Supra*, §§ 308, 322 *et seq.*; Adlard v. Booth, 7 C. & P. 108; see Gillett v. Mawman, 1 Taunt. 140; Wadsworth v. Alcott, 2 Seld. 64; Martin v. Schoenberger, 8 W. & S. 367; King v. Humphreys, 10 Barr, 217; Steeples v. Newton, 7 Oregon, 110.

⁴ Werner v. Humphreys, 2 M. & G. 853; see Lee v. Griffin, 1 B. & S. 272; Leake, 2d ed. 68, 70.

⁵ Lee v. Griffin, 1 B. & S. 272; see Clay v. Yates, 1 H. & N. 730; Campa-

nari v. Woodburn, 15 C. B. 400; see discussion of this case in Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 102; and see Prescott v. Locke, 51 N. H. 96.

⁶ Appleby v. Myers, L. R. 2 C. P. 651; *supra*, § 322; see Morrison v. Cummings, 26 Vt. 486; McClurg v. Price, 59 Penn. St. 420.

⁷ Appleby v. Myers, *ut supra*.

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 70; *supra*, §§ 286 *et seq.*; Menetone v. Athewes, 3 Burr. 1592; Cook v. McCabe, 53 Wis. 250; cited *supra*, § 326; see McMellan v. Melloy, 10 Neb. 228, where it was held that on a contract to thresh an entire

the premises on which the work was to be done were burned after an instalment was performed and before it was paid for, the work being divisible in instalments, it was held that the employee could recover for the instalment finished.¹ Hence, whenever the object on which labor is to be spent is destroyed by *casus* before the labor is complete, then if the contract is divisible there can be a recovery for the work actually done;² and an employee who is prevented by *casus* from serving out his full term of employment, may nevertheless recover for the services actually rendered on a *quantum meruit*.³ When, also, a contract for work and labor at wages has been terminated by any means other than the voluntary refusal of the employee to perform the work on his part, and the employer has received benefit from the labor performed or material furnished by the employee, "the value of such labor and materials may be recovered on a count upon a *quantum meruit*, in which case the actual benefit which the defendant receives from the plaintiff is to be paid for, independently of the terms of the contract."⁴ "We have abundant reason to believe that the general understanding of the community is, that the hired laborer shall be entitled to compensation for the service actually performed, though he do not continue the entire term contracted for, and such contract must be presumed to be made with reference to that understanding, unless an express

crop of wheat at a given price per acre, the employee, failing fully to perform, may recover at the contract price for what he has done, less the damages sustained by the employer by the breach of the contract.

¹ *Schwartz v. Saunders*, 46 Ill. 18; see *supra*, § 322.

² *Supra*, § 326.

³ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 849; citing *Dickey v. Linscott*, 20 Me. 453; *Lakeman v. Pollard*, 43 Me. 463; *Fenton v. Clark*, 11 Vt. 557; *Fuller v. Brown*, 11 Met. 440; *Ryan v. Dayton*, 25 Conn. 188; *Fahy v. North*, 19 Barb. 341. In *Dewey v. School Dist.*, 43 Mich. 480, it was held that a teacher employed in a public school might re-

cover for his salary for a period during which the school was suspended on account of smallpox having attacked some of the scholars. See, on this topic, a learned note in 38 Am. Rep. 206, as reproduced in part in 25 Alb. L. J. 384; and see distinction as to *casus* taken, *supra*, §§ 308, 311, 322. The rule where completion of the job is prevented by the employer's interference is discussed *infra*, § 716.

⁴ Lord, J., *Fitzgerald v. Allen*, 128 Mass. 234; citing *Hayward v. Leonard*, 7 Pick. 181; *Smith v. Meeting House*, 8 Pick. 178; *Moulton v. Trask*, 9 Met. 577; *Snow v. Ware*, 13 Met. 42; *Atkins v. Barnstable*, 97 Mass. 428.

stipulation shows the contrary." . . "Where a beneficial service has been performed and received, under contracts of this kind, the mutual agreements cannot be considered as going to the whole of the consideration, so as to make them mutual conditions, the one precedent to the other, without a specific proviso to that effect."¹

§ 715. A contract of common carriage is dependent upon the delivery of the goods at a designated place; and if by *casus* such delivery is prevented, the carrier cannot recover *pro tanto* for freight for the part of the route over which the goods were taken.² It is otherwise, however, in cases where the owner resumes possession of the goods at an intermediate point, accepting delivery at that point in lieu of delivery at the point of destination.³

§ 716. A party who is employed at fixed wages, and who is wrongfully dismissed during his term of service, or whose term of service is otherwise closed by the employer's action, is entitled, if he elect to rescind the contract, to recover on a *quantum meruit* for the work done;⁴ or he may recover damages independently for the breach of contract, electing to consider it still in operation, and binding the employer.⁵

Hence, when there has been a contract for service, even on a salary not due until the close of a year, and the employer

¹ Britton v. Turner, 6 N. H. 481; adopted in Fenton v. Clark, 11 Vt. 560; Duncan v. Baker, 21 Kan. 99; Parcell v. McComber, 11 Neb. 211. But see Olmstead v. Beale, 19 Pick. 529; *infra*, § 718.

² Leake, 2d ed. 70; Cook v. Jennings, 7 T. R. 381; Metcalfe v. Ironworks Co., L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 613; L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 423; Caze v. Ins. Co., 7 Cranch, 358; Columbia Ins. Co. v. Catlett, 12 Wheat. 383. This applies where a ship is brought in by salvors, The Kathleen, L. R. 4 Adm. 269; and where the master is obliged to sell part of the cargo at an intermedi-

ate port for the refitting of the ship. Hopper v. Burness, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 137.

³ Ibid.; The Soblomsten, L. R. 1 Adm. 293.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 605, 714; Planché v. Colburn, 8 Bing. 14; Chicago v. Tilley, 103 U. S. 146; Alexander v. Hoffman, 5 W. & S. 382; Campbell v. Gates, 10 Barr, 483; Mitchell v. Scott, 41 Mich. 108; see Weber v. Ins. Co., 5 Mo. Ap. 51; Du Quoin Co. v. Thorwell, 3 Ill. Ap. 394.

⁵ Goodman v. Pocock, 15 Q. B. 576; Cox v. McLaughlin, 54 Cal. 606; see *supra*, § 605.

chooses to dismiss without cause the employee at the end of a quarter, the employee can maintain at once an action for his services on a *quantum meruit*, or he may sue for damages caused to him by the wrongful dismissal, as a part of which damages his salary *pro tanto* may be included.¹ Even when there is an employment to do a specific work (*locatio operis*), *e. g.*, painting a picture, and the employer stops the work before completion, the employee may recover on a *quantum meruit*.² If the suit be for damages, they may be reduced by showing that the servant refused other suitable employment, and remained idle when he might have received wages.³ When the contract is to complete a specific piece of work, the employer, by preventing the completion of the work, may make himself liable for a breach of contract.⁴ As a rule a party who disables himself from performing his part of a contract, cannot set up as a defence a technical default in the other party.⁵—When a contract is determined by mutual consent, the employee may recover wages *pro rata*,⁶ and so when the term is broken into by the employer's death.⁷

§ 717. If, however, when his wages are still running, an employee abandon his post, he exposes himself to a suit by his employer for damages if such are incurred by his abandonment. If any

But not when completion is prevented by employee.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 605–6; *Goodman v. Pocock*, 15 Q. B. 576; *Canada v. Canada*, 6 Cush. 15; see *Derby v. Johnson*, 21 Vt. 18; *Myers v. Baptist Soc.*, 38 Vt. 614; *Moulton v. Trask*, 9 Met. 577; *Costigan v. R. R.*, 2 Denio, 612; *Hall v. Rupley*, 10 Barr, 231; *Stewart v. Walker*, 14 Penn. St. 293.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 66; see *supra*, § 714.

³ See *Cutter v. Powell*, 6 T. R. 320; *Elderton v. Emmens*, 4 C. B. 498, 4 H. L. C. 624; *Caden v. Farwell*, 98 Mass. 137.

⁴ *Supra*, § 605.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 325, 606; *infra*, §§ 747–901. That when there is a hiring for a term and a wrongful dismissal before the close of the term, the employee can

recover for the whole term, see, in addition to the cases given above, *Miller v. Goddard*, 34 Me. 102; *Fowler v. Armour*, 24 Ala. 194; *Pond v. Wyman*, 15 Mo. 175; *Dunn v. Hereford*, 1 Wy. Ter. 206. But a servant dismissed before the expiration of a term contracted for cannot maintain an action to recover wages occurring subsequently to the dismissal. His remedy is a suit for damages. *Weed v. Burt*, 78 N. Y. 191; *White v. Gray*, 4 Ill. Ap. 228; see *Hamill v. Fonte*, 51 Md. 419; *Alexander v. Americus*, 61 Ga. 36.

⁶ *Lamburn v. Cruden*, 2 M. & G. 253; *Thomas v. Williams*, 1 A. & E. 685; *Rogers v. Steele*, 24 Vt. 513.

⁷ *Dryer v. Lewis*, 57 Ala. 551.

portion of his wages be overdue by the occurrence of a period of payment before his giving up his position, such amount, if there be no set-off, may be recovered by him. But he cannot recover for the fraction of a term he wrongfully broke into, *e.g.*, if he leave in the middle of a quarter, his wages being payable quarterly.¹ If, in other words, the servant leave wantonly before the expiration of his term of service, and the service contract is for an entirety, then he forfeits his right to wages for the whole term.² "Where there is an executory contract, and the plaintiff has performed part of it, and wilfully and without legal excuse refuses to perform the rest of it, he cannot recover either in general or special assumpsit."³ "It is the settled law of this state, that when one party contracts to labor for another for a specified term, and leaves the service of the employer before the expiration of such term without any cause proceeding from the employer or 'the act of God,' he cannot maintain an action for the value of the services he has rendered."⁴ The same distinctions are applicable when he is rightfully dismissed for misconduct.⁵—Mere harsh language by the employer will not justify the employee in giving up his place.⁶ But the closing of his term of service,

¹ *Supra*, §§ 325, 596; Leake, 2d ed. 71, citing *Taylor v. Laird*, 1 H. & N. 266; see *Atkin v. Acton*, 4 C. & P. 208; *Powers v. Wilson*, 47 Iowa, 666.

² *Davis v. Maxwell*, 12 Met. 286; *Reab v. Moore*, 19 Johns. 337; *Eldridge v. Rowe*, 2 Gilm. 91.

³ *Robinson, J.*, in *Gill v. Vogler*, 52 Md. 666, citing *Faxan v. Mansfield*, 2 Mass. 147; *Stark v. Parker*, 2 Pick. 267; *Cutler v. Powell*, 2 Smith, Lead. Cas. 1.

⁴ *Hough, J.*, *Rowland v. R. R.*, 73 Mo. 619.

⁵ See *supra*, § 595-6; and see, further, *Turner v. Robinson*, 5 B. & Ad. 789; *Spain v. Arnott*, 2 Starke, 227; *Ridgway v. Market Co.*, 3 Ad. & El. 171; *Atkin v. Acton*, 4 C. & P. 208; *Nichols v. Coolahan*, 10 Met. 449; *Thayer v. Wadsworth*, 19 Pick. 349; *Libhart v.*

Wood, 1 W. & S. 265; *Stewart v. Walker*, 14 Penn. St. 293; *Byrd v. Boyd*, 4 McCord, 246; see *Monell v. Burns*, 4 Denio, 121; *Lynch v. Stone*, 4 Denio, 356; *Schnerr v. Lamp*, 19 Mo. 40; *Southmayd v. Ins. Co.*, 47 Wis. 517. In some states, however, an employee, even after a rightful dismissal, may recover on a *quantum meruit* for services actually rendered. *Lawrence v. Gullifer*, 38 Me. 532; *Champion v. Harts-horn*, 9 Conn. 574, and cases cited 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 849; as for what is a rightful dismissal see *infra*, § 718. In such cases damages through the employee's breach of contract are to be deducted. *McMillan v. Malloy*, 10 Neb. 228. That wilful disobedience will justify a dismissal see *infra*, § 718.

⁶ *Forsyth v. Hastings*, 25 Vt. 646.

whether by unjustifiable abandonment on his part, or just dismissal by his employer, precludes him from recovery for the term thus left incomplete.¹ It has been argued, however, with great force, that a party who has done his work faithfully through a large fraction of a term, should not be precluded from recovering for such fraction because he has thrown up his employment before the term is complete, no damage being done to the employer.² And, as we have seen, when a payment is overdue, though the money has not been received, the employee is entitled to recover it, though during the next term he wrongfully abandons his post, or is rightfully dismissed, if there be no set-off.³

§ 718. In England an engagement for domestic service is inferred, unless local or special custom be to the contrary, to be for a year, with a right of determination on a month's warning, or by payment of a month's wages.⁴ This rule has been applied to a head gardener,⁵ and to a huntsman,⁶ but does not apply to clerks,⁷ or governesses.⁸ In this country no such implication exists,⁹ and even in England the rule is subordinate to local or special usage.¹⁰ And the fact that wages are payable at fixed intervals short of a year rebuts the inference of yearly hiring.¹¹ When the hiring is for a particular season, it expires by its own limitation at the closing of the

Term of domestic service dependent on circumstances.

¹ See cases cited *supra*, to this section; *Cutter v. Powel*, 6 T. R. 320; and notes in *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed.; *Huttmann v. Boulnois*, 2 C. & P. 510; *Miller v. Goddard*, 34 Me. 102; *Philbrook v. Belknap*, 6 Vt. 383; *Mack v. Bragg*, 30 Vt. 571; *Stark v. Parker*, 2 Pick. 267; *Olmstead v. Beale*, 19 Pick. 528; *Rice v. Dwight Man. Co.*, 2 Cush. 80.

² *Britton v. Turner*, 6 N. H. 481; *Laton v. King*, 19 N. H. 280; *Davis v. Barrington*, 30 N. H. 529; and see *Fenton v. Clark*, 11 Vt. 560, and cases *supra*, § 714.

³ *Taylor v. Laird*, 1 H. & N. 266; *Button v. Thompson*, L. R. 4 C. P. 330; *White v. Atkins*, 8 Cush. 367.

⁴ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 839; *Turner v. Mason*, 14 M. & W. 112; *Lilley v. Elwin*, 11 Q. B. 742.

⁵ *Nowlan v. Ablett*, 2 Cr. M. & R. 54.

⁶ *Nicoll v. Greaves*, 17 C. B. N. S. 27.

⁷ *Fairman v. Oakford*, 5 H. & N. 635. See *Buckingham v. Canal Co.*, 46 L. T. N. S. 885.

⁸ *Todd v. Kerrich*, 8 Exch. 151.

⁹ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 839.

¹⁰ *Metzner v. Bolton*, 9 Exch. 518; *Parker v. Ibbetson*, 4 C. B. N. S. 346; *Blaisdell v. Lewis*, 32 Me. 515. See *Reab v. Moore*, 19 Johns. 337; *Kirk v. Hartman*, 63 Penn. St. 97; *Wilmington Coal Co. v. Lamb*, 90 Ill. 465.

¹¹ *Baxter v. Nurse*, 6 M. & G. 935.

season.¹ But where the hiring is merely at will, without limit assigned, or without fixed periods of payment of wages, a person so employed may be discharged without notice.²—Hiring by weekly wages, there being no other limitation of time in the contract, is regarded as hiring by the week; hiring by monthly wages as hiring by the month.³—Special regulations adopted by employers will be held binding, if reasonable, on employees, if they have notice of them.⁴—An employee may be dismissed without warning if he wilfully disobey any lawful order of the employer;⁵ or if he be incapable of doing the work he undertook to do;⁶ or if he be guilty of any offence against decency or morality.⁷

§ 719. Where services are rendered as a matter of family or friendly attention, a promise to pay will not be inferred. There is in such cases no proposal to serve for money, and hence there can be no acceptance;⁸

Special
promise to
pay not to
be implied

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 273; *Beeston v. Collyer*, 4 Bing. 309; *Brown v. Symonds*, 8 C. B. N. S. 208; *Langton v. Carleton*, L. R. 9 Ex. 57.

² *Kirk v. Hartman*, 63 Penn. St. 97. —Where the agreement was that P. should work for D. for “seven months at \$12 per month,” it was held that this was an entire contract, and that \$84 were to be paid at the end of the seven months, and not \$12 at the end of each month, and that if P. left without cause before the seven months expired, he was entitled to recover nothing for his services. *Davis v. Maxwell*, 12 Met. 286, citing *Stark v. Parker*, 2 Pick. 267; *Olmstead v. Beale*, 19 Pick. 528; *Thayer v. Wadsworth*, 19 Pick. 349; *Nichols v. Coolahan*, 10 Met. 449. But see *contra*, § 714.

³ *R. v. Hampreston*, 5 T. R. 205; *Bayley v. Rimmell*, 1 M. & W. 507.

⁴ *Harman v. Salmon Falls Co.*, 35 Me. 447; *Hunt v. Otis Co.*, 4 Met. 464; see *supra*, § 24. It was ruled in *Bast v. Byrne*, 51 Wis. 531, that a master who keeps a servant in his employ through

a fixed term of service, cannot deduct from the servant's wages for lost time, nor compel him to make up the lost time. The master may discharge the servant for an unauthorized absence, but by receiving the servant back after absence he waives the right. That death of either party works a dissolution, see *supra*, §§ 312, 325; *Farrow v. Wilson*, L. R. 4 C. P. 744.

⁵ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 843; *Turner v. Mason*, 14 M. & W. 112; *Amor v. Fearon*, 9 A. & E. 548; *Lilley v. Elwin*, 11 Q. B. 742; *Lomax v. Arding*, 10 Exch. 734. As to dismissal see *supra*, § 717.

⁶ *Harmer v. Cornelius*, 5 C. B. N. S. 236.

⁷ *Atkin v. Acton*, 4 C. & P. 408; *Singer v. McCormick*, 4 W. & S. 265; *Byrd v. Boyd*, 4 McC. 246; *Jones v. Jones*, 2 Swan, 605; *McCormick v. Demary*, 10 Neb. 515.

⁸ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 838; *Munger v. Munger*, 33 N. H. 581; *Bundy v. Hyde*, 50 N. H. 122; *Davis v. Goodnow*, 27 Vt. 715; *Robinson v.*

nor when they are at the time regarded on both sides as a courtesy.¹ When services are rendered *prima facie* as a matter of family duty or courtesy, it is necessary, if compensation is sought for them, to prove a distinct arrangement between the parties by which payment is to be made;² the question, however, being dependent upon the relations and circumstances of the parties.³ And this is held to be the case with regard not merely to blood relations, but to relations by marriage,⁴ though this does not apply where a son-in-law, in poor circumstances, takes his mother-in-law as an inmate of his family with an understanding that he should be paid for her board;⁵ nor to a son-in-law who materially assists a father-in-law;⁶ nor to a niece by marriage who does work for her uncle by marriage.⁷ The rule, also, does not apply to services which

in cases of friendly or family service, nor where there is no recognition of business relationship.

Cushman, 2 Denio, 152; Wilcox v. Denio, 152; Ridgeway v. English, 2 Zab. 409; Candor's App., 5 W. & S. 513; Steel v. Steel, 12 Penn. St. 64; Leidig v. Coover, 47 Penn. St. 534; Miller v. Miller, 16 Ill. 296; Taylor v. Lincumfelter, 1 Lea (Tenn.), 83; Osier v. Hobbs, 33 Ark. 216. "The law holds that as between near relatives a contract for service must be clearly established, and will not be implied." Opinion of Neale, P. J., adopted by supreme court in Overseers of Plum Creek v. Overseers, 1 Penn. Sup. Ct. 408.

¹ Harshberger v. Alger, 31 Grat. 52; O'Connor v. Beckwith, 41 Mich. 657.

² 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 838; Sharp v. Cropsey, 11 Barb. 224; De-trance v. Austin, 9 Barr, 309; Lantz v. Frey, 14 Penn. St. 201; Butler v. Slam, 50 Penn. St. 456.

³ Wence v. Wykoff, 52 Iowa, 644.

⁴ Amey's App., 49 Penn. St. 126; Shoch v. Garrett, 69 Penn. St. 144.

⁵ Gardner v. Hefley, 49 Penn. St. 163. That there may be inferred from circumstances a special contract by a father to pay for the services of a minor son, see Titman v. Titman, 64 Penn.

Cushman, 2 Denio, 152; Wilcox v. Denio, 152; Ridgeway v. English, 2 Zab. 409; Candor's App., 5 W. & S. 513; Steel v. Steel, 12 Penn. St. 64; Leidig v. Coover, 47 Penn. St. 534; Miller v. Miller, 16 Ill. 296; Taylor v. Lincumfelter, 1 Lea (Tenn.), 83; Osier v. Hobbs, 33 Ark. 216. "The law holds that as between near relatives a contract for service must be clearly established, and will not be implied." Opinion of Neale, P. J., adopted by supreme court in Overseers of Plum Creek v. Overseers, 1 Penn. Sup. Ct. 408.

¹ Ball v. Newton, 7 Cush. 599; Robinson v. Raynor, 28 N. Y. 494; Candor's App., 5 W. & S. 515.

² Munger v. Munger, 33 N. H. 581; Fitch v. Peckham, 16 Vt. 150; Davis v. Goodnow, 27 Vt. 715; Guild v. Guild, 15 Pick. 130; Robinson v. Cushman, 2

Denio, 152; Ridgeway v. English, 2 Zab. 409; Candor's App., 5 W. & S. 513; Steel v. Steel, 12 Penn. St. 64; Leidig v. Coover, 47 Penn. St. 534; Miller v. Miller, 16 Ill. 296; Taylor v. Lincumfelter, 1 Lea (Tenn.), 83; Osier v. Hobbs, 33 Ark. 216. "The law holds that as between near relatives a contract for service must be clearly established, and will not be implied." Opinion of Neale, P. J., adopted by supreme court in Overseers of Plum Creek v. Overseers, 1 Penn. Sup. Ct. 408.

³ Harshberger v. Alger, 31 Grat. 52; O'Connor v. Beckwith, 41 Mich. 657.

⁴ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 838; Sharp v. Cropsey, 11 Barb. 224; De-trance v. Austin, 9 Barr, 309; Lantz v. Frey, 14 Penn. St. 201; Butler v. Slam, 50 Penn. St. 456.

⁵ Wence v. Wykoff, 52 Iowa, 644.

⁶ Amey's App., 49 Penn. St. 126; Shoch v. Garrett, 69 Penn. St. 144.

⁷ Gardner v. Hefley, 49 Penn. St. 163. That there may be inferred from circumstances a special contract by a father to pay for the services of a minor son, see Titman v. Titman, 64 Penn.

are rendered with the understanding that they are to be rewarded, at discretion, by a legacy;¹ nor when they consist in improvements to the defendant's real estate, he not having asked to have the work done, or actively acquiesced in it;² nor when the circumstances are, for other reasons, inconsistent with the hypothesis of a business engagement.³

§ 720. When a stated salary is given, an officer is obliged, as a rule, to give his whole time, and cannot sue for extra compensation on a *quantum meruit*.⁴ Thus, when a salaried officer of a corporation performs the usual and ordinary duties of his office, as defined by the charter or by-laws, he cannot recover special compensation therefor, unless it has been specially agreed that he should be so compensated.⁵ It is otherwise as to

Nor where there is a stated salary or other fixed compensation.

St. 480; *Moist's App.*, 74 Penn. St. 166. That there is no implied contract to pay even an adult son assisting his father, see *Zerbe v. Miller*, 16 Penn. St. 488; *Mosteller's App.*, 30 Penn. St. 473.

¹ *Baxter v. Gray*, 3 M. & G. 771; *Little v. Dawson*, 4 Dall. 111; *Walker's Est.*, 3 Rawle, 243; *Neal v. Gilmore*, 79 Penn. St. 421. That though there can be no recovery for services rendered on the mere expectation of a legacy, there can be recovery for services to a deceased person who has contracted to pay for them by provision in his will, but has neglected to make such provision, see *Miller v. Lash*, 85 N. C. 51.

² *Munro v. Butt*, 8 E. & B. 738; *Patterson v. Luckley*, L. R. 10 Ex. 330; see *supra*, § 22.

³ *Fitch v. Peckham*, 16 Vt. 150; *Spring v. Hulett*, 104 Mass. 591; *supra*, § 22; *White v. Corlies*, 46 N. Y. 467. In *Taylor v. Laird*, 25 L. J. Exch. 329, 1 H. & N. 266, the captain of a ship, after a contract to take command for a certain voyage at fixed wages, abandoned the command during the voyage, but afterwards, without being asked,

rendered services in navigating the ship to her home port. He sued for his services, but it was held that as the defendant had not invited or knowingly permitted the services, and had repudiated them when brought to his notice, he could not be made liable. *Anson*, *ut supra*, 16; *Leake*, 2d ed. 59. In a case in New York, in 1880, it appeared that the plaintiff and the defendant who were in the habit of having business transactions together to a large amount, were accustomed from time to time to render each other services of courtesy not to be brought into the accounts. It was held that these services were matters of mutual accommodation, to be regarded as gratuitous. *Potter v. Carpenter*, 76 N. Y. 157.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 500-2; *infra*, § 720.

⁵ *New York, etc. R. R. v. Ketchum*, 27 Conn. 180; *Loan Ass. v. Stonemetz*, 29 Penn. St. 534; *Kilpatrick v. Bridge Co.*, 49 Penn. St. 121; *Merrick v. Coal Co.*, 61 Ill. 472; *Cheeny v. R. R.*, 68 Ill. 570; *Holder v. R. R.*, 71 Ill. 106; *Franz v. R. R.*, 55 Iowa, 107. See *Condon v. Jersey City*, 43 N. J. L. 452; and cases *supra*, § 502.

extraordinary services not in the line of his duties.¹ An apprentice, also, cannot recover from his master for extra work, even though there be a promise to pay.²

§ 721. As analogous to the above rulings may be considered those in which it is held that a party who takes land on which there are burdens may bind himself, by the mere fact of taking the land, to pay such burdens. That in such cases the party holding the incumbrance may, in most jurisdictions, sue, we will see hereafter.³ It is now to be observed that a party accepting a deed-poll, binds himself to perform any conditions implied by the deed. "By the law of this commonwealth, affirmed by many decisions, the grantee, by the acceptance of the deed, becomes liable to perform, according to its terms, any promise or undertaking therein expressed to be made in his behalf, although, not having himself signed the deed, he must, while the old forms of action were retained, have been sued in *assumpsit* and not in *covenant*."⁴ "The fact that the defendant has since sold all the lands to a third person affords no reason for denying or limiting his liability on his agreement with the plaintiff."⁵

Vendee
taking land
may agree
to pay
burdens.

¹ *Franz v. R. R.*, *ut supra*.

² *Bailey v. King*, 1 Whart. 113; *supra*, § 500.

³ See *infra*, § 786 a.

⁴ Gray, C. J., *Locke v. Homer*, 131 Mass. 103, citing *Fenton v. Lord*, 128 Mass. 466; *Dickason v. Williams*, 129

Mass. 182; *Coolidge v. Smith*, 129

Mass. 554; *Rogers v. Fire Co.*, 9 Wend. 611; *Rawson v. Copland*, 2 Sand. Ch. 251. See *Muhlig v. Fiske*, 131 Mass.

113.

⁵ Gray, C. J., *Reed v. Paul*, 131 Mass. 132.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.

General rule that suit for money had and received may be maintained where one person receives money for another, § 722.

Money must have been received to plaintiff's use, § 723.

I. MONEY RECEIVED BY ONE PERSON FOR ANOTHER.

Agent liable to principal subject to terms of agency, § 724.

Even though object be illegal, § 725.

So of trustee who admits balance, § 726.

Executor not liable to distributees unless on admitted claim, § 727.

Money received to use of third party cannot be sued for by such party without acknowledgment, § 728.

Stakeholder not liable until contingency occurs, § 729.

II. MONEY WRONGFULLY OBTAINED.

Money wrongfully obtained may be sued for as money received to plaintiff's use, § 730.

A. may recover proceeds of his property wrongfully sold by B., § 731.

When A.'s money in B.'s hands is wrongfully obtained from B. by C., it may be recovered from C. by A., § 732.

Such money cannot be pursued in hands of strangers, § 733.

Goods fraudulently obtained may be followed into other hands, § 734.

Election to waive tort when made is final, § 735.

Value of goods unlawfully obtained may be recovered back, § 736.

Money obtained by extortion may be recovered back, § 737.

So of money obtained by carriers, hotel keepers, and public officers, § 738.

Proceeds of goods wrongfully sold may be recovered from sheriff, § 739.

Money obtained by legal process cannot be recovered back, § 740.

Nor can money paid for illegal purposes, § 741.

III. MONEY PAID WITHOUT CONSIDERATION.

Money paid on an inoperative contract may be recovered back, § 742.

Deposit on real estate may be recovered back on failure to make title, § 743.

Money paid for worthless securities may be recovered back, § 744.

Money paid cannot be recovered back when contract is prevented from completion by *casus*, § 745.

When title of goods is warranted, price can be recovered back; and so when there is breach of warranty going to whole consideration, § 746.

When failure of consideration is imputable to plaintiff, he cannot recover, § 747.

On partial failure of consideration, price when entire cannot be recovered back, § 748.

A party buying on speculation and losing cannot recover back, § 749.

Compromise money paid voluntarily cannot be recovered back, § 750.

Money paid from motives of policy or kindness cannot be recovered back, nor debts of honor, § 751.

IV. MONEY PAID IN MISTAKE.

Money paid in mistake of fact may be recovered back, § 752.

Mere negligence does not preclude party from recovering, § 753.

Money paid in mistake of law cannot be recovered back, § 754.

When money paid by third person to agent can be recovered back, § 755.

§ 722. WHEN money is received by one party to another's use in such a way that a contractual relation may be assumed to exist between them, or where money is taken wrongfully by one party from another, or is paid without consideration, or is paid in mistake, an action for money had and received may at common law be maintained by the party for whose benefit the money should be held against the party holding the money. In such cases, however, it must appear that the defendant received money; not merely money's worth, such as stock or goods.¹—Lord Mansfield, in a famous judgment, speaks of a suit for money had and received “as a kind of equitable action;”² and though in England this was once regarded as going too far,³ yet in this country, in part from the convenience of the procedure, in part in some jurisdictions from lack of a distinctive court of chancery, Lord Mansfield's opinion has been accepted in many jurisdictions, and liability maintained for money had and received in all cases in which equity would hold a party responsible for money which he ought rightfully to pay another.⁴ And even in England the preponderance of opinion is in conformity with the views of Lord Mansfield, that “where money is due *ex aequo et bono*, it may be recovered in an ac-

When one party ought to hold money to another's use, suit for money had and received may be maintained.

¹ Chitty on Pl. 10th Am. ed. (1879) 362; Marsh v. Keating, 1 Bing. N. C. 198; Beardsley v. Root, 11 John. 464; Ralston v. Bell, 2 Dall. 242; Hantz v. Sealey, 6 Binn. 405, and cases cited *infra*, § 723.

² Moses v. Macfarlan, 2 Burr. 1012.

³ Miller v. Atlee, 3 Ex. 799; Johnson v. Johnson, 3 B. & P. 169.

⁴ Allen v. McKeen, 1 Sumner, 317;

Herrin v. Libby, 36 Me. 350; Knapp v. Hobbs, 50 N. H. 478; Bogart v. Nevins, 6 S. & R. 369; Irvine v. Hanlon, 10 S. & R. 219; Harvey v. Turner, 4 Rawle, 223; Arrott v. Brown, 6 Whart. 9; Neff v. Horner, 63 Penn. St. 329; American Steamship Co. v. Young, 89 Penn. St. 186; Gallagher v. Frorer, 4 Ill. Ap. 330.

tion" of this class.¹ This is *a fortiori* the case under recent legislation prescribing that when there is a conflict between common law and equitable doctrine the latter is to prevail.

§ 723. To sustain an action of this class it is not necessary that there should be express contractual relations between the plaintiff and the defendant.² It is enough if such relations can be implied from the facts. A party who knowingly receives money as agent for another, such agency being either express or implied from the nature of the transaction, is bound to pay the money so received over to such other person.³ Thus, when one of two joint contractors receives the money due them both, he is liable to the other in a suit for money had and received.⁴ Money, however, must have been received, and the action does not lie to recover specific articles which, though reducible to money, have not been so reduced.⁵ Hence, bank stock or other securities cannot be recovered *in specie* in this form of action.⁶ But, on proof of the reception by the defendant of whatever passes as currency—*e. g.*, bank notes—there may be a recovery, if the property be in the plaintiff, and the other constituents of the action are made out.⁷ And when articles are readily converted into cash, and when the probability is, from the nature of the case, that they were so converted by the defendant, it will require but slight extrinsic indications to support the inference of such conversion.⁸

¹ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 898; citing *Tindal, C. J.*, *Smith v. Jones*, 11 L. J. C. P. 100.

² *Infra*, §§ 732 *et seq.*; *Mason v. Waite*, 17 Mass. 563; *Harper v. Claxton*, 62 Ala. 46.

³ *Infra*, § 728; *Marshall v. Hopkins*, 15 East, 309; *Clarence v. Marshall*, 2 C. & M. 495; *Knapp v. Hobbs*, 50 N. H. 476; *Carnegie v. Morrison*, 2 Met. 396; *Eagle Bank v. Smith*, 5 Conn. 71.

⁴ *Kelly v. Evans*, 3 Pen. & W. 387; *Galbreath v. Moore*, 2 Watts, 86.

⁵ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 902; *Moore v. Pyke*, 11 East, 52; *Wharton v.*

Walker, 4 B. & C. 163; *Marsh v. Keating*, 1 Bing. N. C. 198; *Morgan v. Elford*, L. R. 4 C. D. 352; *Beardsley v. Root*, 11 Johns. 464; *Hantz v. Sealey*, 6 Binn. 405.

⁶ *Infra*, §§ 734–736; *Nightingale v. Devisme*, 5 Burr. 2589; *M'Lachlan v. Evans*, 1 Y. & J. 380.

⁷ *Floyd v. Day*, 3 Mass. 403; *Payson v. Whitcomb*, 15 Pick. 212; *Emerson v. Baylies*, 19 Pick. 55; *Shepard v. Palmer*, 6 Conn. 95; *Ainslie v. Wilson*, 7 Cow. 662.

⁸ *Infra*, § 731; *Longchamp v. Kenny*, 1 Dougl. 137; *Whitwell v. Bennett*, 3

A party, also, who makes himself liable for money had and received, is estopped from saying that the money was not actually in his custody.¹ But the title to land cannot be tried in this form of action.²—As will be hereafter seen, the rule in England and in some jurisdictions in this country is that the plaintiff cannot recover in this or any other contractual suit, unless an acknowledgment of indebtedness from the defendant to the plaintiff can be implied from all the circumstances of the case.³ But the great preponderance of authority in this country is to the effect that it is not necessary to enable a plaintiff to sue on a contract that he should have been a party to it.⁴

I. MONEY RECEIVED BY ONE PERSON FOR ANOTHER.

§ 724. Where an agent receives money from his principal for specific objects, and the principal revokes the directions before the money is appropriated, the agent is liable to the principal in an action for money had and received.⁵ An agent, also, who repudiates his principal's authority, or who disposes of the principal's property in violation of orders, is at any time liable in this form of action for the money in his hands.⁶ An agent, also, intrusted with an article to sell may in this way be sued for the proceeds, whether the sale was for money or not.⁷ But when an agent, when performing his duties as such, loses money employed at the time in the agency, the

Agent
liable to
principal
subject to
terms of
agency.

B. & P. 559; *Hunter v. Welsh*, 1 Stark. 178; *Hatten v. Robinson*, 4 Blackf. 480.

¹ *Jackson v. Mayo*, 11 Mass. 152; *Emerson v. Baylies*, 19 Pick. 55.

² *Ker v. Osborn*, 9 East, 378; *Clarence v. Marshall*, 2 C. & M. 495; *Wyman v. Hook*, 2 Greenl. 338; *Bigelow v. Jones*, 10 Pick. 165; *Baker v. Howell*, 6 S. & R. 481; and other cases cited 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 907.

³ *Infra*, § 728.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 728, 786 *et seq.* 794.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 113; Wh. on Agency, § 250; *Taylor v. Lendey*, 9 East, 49; *Fletcher v. Marshall*, 15 M. & W. 755; *Parry v. Roberts*, 3 A. & E. 118; *Schee v. Hassinger*, 2 Binn. 325.

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Thorpe v. Thorpe*, 3 B. & Ad. 580; *Parry v. Roberts*, 3 A. & E. 718; *Fletcher v. Marshall*, 15 M. & W. 755; *Hemenway v. Hemenway*, 5 Pick. 389; *Jackson v. Baker*, 6 Cow. 183; *Chinn v. Chinn*, 22 La. An. 599.

⁷ *Miller v. Miller*, 7 Pick. 136.

remedy against him is, not a suit for money had and received, for to this the answer would be that he had employed the money as the principal directed, but an action on the case for negligence.¹—A previous demand is not necessary to sustain an action against a factor who improperly neglects to render an account of sales.²

§ 725. Even when a traffic is illegal, an agent receiving money to engage in it will not be entitled to retain as against his principal such money after the agent's authority is revoked,³ supposing the object of the suit be not to obtain a share in illegal profits.⁴ Nor can an agent, where part of the consideration was illegal, set up, after the accounts between him and the principal are closed, the illegal taint.⁵ But if the act of constituting the agency be itself a substantive crime, then there can be no recovery.⁶

Even
though
object be
illegal.

¹ Wh. on Agency, §§ 277, 306, 537; Wh. on Neg. § 156; Parry v. Roberts, 3 A. & E. 118; Mazetti v. Williams, 1 B. & Ad. 415; Wilson v. Short, 6 Hare, 366; Farebrother v. Ansley, 1 Camp. 343; Bell v. Cunningham, 3 Pet. 69; Dodge v. Tileston, 12 Pick. 328; Hinde v. Smith, 6 Lansing, 464; Arrott v. Brown, 6 Whart. 9; Harvey v. Turner, 4 Rawle, 223; Gilson v. Collins, 66 Ill. 136.

² *Supra*, § 575; Chapman v. Shaw, 5 Greenl. 59; Langley v. Sturtevant, 7 Pick. 214; Cooley v. Betts, 24 Wend. 203; Witherup v. Hill, 9 S. & R. 11. One of several heirs agreed with the co-heirs to purchase certain shares of stock in a corporation for their joint benefit, he taking the conveyance, and the other heirs contributing their respective proportions of the purchase-money, subject to future adjustment. He refused, on acquiring title to the shares, to make any adjustment, informing the others that he had concluded to keep the stock himself. It

was held in Massachusetts in 1880 that under such circumstances he was accountable in this form of action to the several heirs for their respective shares of the dividends. Colt v. Clapp, 127 Mass. 476.

³ *Supra*, § 357; Taylor v. Lendey, 9 East, 49; Fletcher v. Marshall, 15 M. & W. 755; Parry v. Roberts, 3 A. & E. 118; Planters' Bk. v. Union Bk., 16 Wall. 483; Lestaples v. Ingraham, 5 Barr, 71; Daniels v. Barney, 22 Ind. 209; Chinn v. Chinn, 22 La. An. 599; and cases cited *supra*, § 357; see, also, §§ 335, 341, 343, 352.

⁴ Buck v. Albee, 26 Vt. 184; Lemon v. Grosskopf, 22 Wis. 447; cited Wald's Pollock, 328-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Farmer v. Russell, 1 B. & P. 296; Bonsfield v. Wilson, 16 M. & W. 185; Nicholson v. Gooch, 5 E. & B. 999; Murray v. Vanderbilt, 39 Barb. 140; Gilliam v. Brown, 43 Miss. 641; Anderson v. Moncrieff, 3 Desaus. 124; and see cases cited *supra*, §§ 338, 357.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 353-7.

§ 726. A trustee, so far as concerns funds flowing into his hands in his fiduciary capacity, is not liable in this form of action to the *cestui que trust*, until account stated, or until a sum is specifically set apart by him as due the latter in an action for money had and received. The procedure must be in equity.

Trustee who admits balance due *cestui que trust* is thus liable.

"No action at law for money had and received, can be maintained against him, though he has money in his hands which, under the terms of the trust, he ought to pay over to the *cestui que trust*, but which he still holds in the character of trustee only."¹ It is otherwise as to balances conceded to be due.—

"If the trustee by appropriating a sum as payable to the *cestui que trust* or otherwise, admits that he holds it to be paid to the *cestui que trust* and for his use, the character of the relation between the parties is changed, and the trustee does not hold it as a trustee, properly so called, but as a receiver, for the other party, who may maintain an action at law for money had and received."²—The fact that a trust is so constructed as to involve in its execution acts contravening a statute does not relieve the trustee from his liability to pay over an admitted balance when demanded by the *cestui que trust*.³—A trustee who mingles trust-money with his own funds, is liable for interest,⁴ and is liable for compound interest in case of any negligence, or in case of his using the money in business.⁵ If he fail to distinguish between his funds and his principal's, in a common mass, the aggregate will be charged to him as his principal's.⁶

¹ Per cur. in *Edwards v. Lowndes*, 1 E. & B. 89; adopted in *Leake*, 2d ed. 116; *Pardoe v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 451; *Hexter v. Loughry*, 6 Ill. App. 362.

² Per cur. in *Edwards v. Lowndes*, 1 E. & B. 891; *Remon v. Hayward*, 2 A. & E. 666; see *Boynton v. Dyer*, 18 Pick. 6; *Jenkins v. Walter*, 8 Gill & J. 218.

³ *Supra*, §§ 335, 341, 343, 352; *Sheppard v. Oxenford*, 1 K. & J. 491; *Worthington v. Curtis*, L. R. 1 C. D. 419.

⁴ Wh. on Ag. §§ 243, 788; *Barney v. Saunders*, 16 How. U. S. 535; *Green v. Winter*, 1 Johns. Ch. 26; *Jacot v. Emmett*, 11 Paige, 142; *Dyott's Est.*, 2 Watts & S. 565; *Graver's App.*, 50 Penn. St. 189; *Jenkins v. Walter*, 8 Gill & J. 218.

⁵ *Boynton v. Dyer*, 18 Pick. 1; *Evertson v. Tappan*, 5 Johns. Ch. 497; *Luken's App.*, 7 W. & S. 48; *Rowan v. Kirkpatrick*, 14 Ill. 1; see *Norris's App.*, 71 Penn. St. 106.

⁶ Wh. on Agency, § 203.

§ 727. Distributive interests in an estate cannot ordinarily be sued for, when in the hands of an executor, as money had and received. The proceeding must be in the probate or other court having jurisdiction.¹ But when an executor admits that he holds a specific fund to the use of a particular legatee, then he can be sued for such fund in an action for money had and received.² And such, also, is the rule as to distributive shares admitted to be due.³ He is, also, thus liable for money lent to him, or had and received by him as executor.⁴

Executor
not liable
to distribu-
tees unless
on admit-
ted claim.

§ 728. Where A. receives money from B. to be paid to C. (as where B. deposits money with A. to C.'s credit), A. is not, as a rule, liable to C. in an action for money had and received, unless there is an acknowledgment on A.'s part to C. that he holds the money to C.'s order, or unless agency be proved.⁵ A banker, for instance, who receives money to meet a bill, is not, without a prior notification or acknowledgment to the holder, or an undertaking by him to the holder, liable to the holder for the amount, since, until such notification, the money could be recalled by the depositor.⁶ Nor has the holder, without some such relation between them, any claim in equity.⁷ And, as a general rule, an order to a banker or other agent to hold money due the principal to the order of a third person does not enable the remittee to sue the agent in an action for money had and received until there is an acknowledgment by the agent of the claim of the remittee.⁸ Thus, where P. re-

Money re-
ceived to
use of third
party can-
not be sued
for by such
party with-
out ac-
knowledg-
ment.

¹ Jones v. Tanner, 7 B. & C. 542; Barlow v. Browne, 16 M. & W. 126; see Gregory v. Harman, 3 C. & P. 205. Mandeville v. Welch, 5 Wheat. 277; Fugure v. Mutual Soc., 46 Vt. 362;

² Topham v. Morecroft, 8 E. & B. 972; Howard v. Brownhill, 23 L. J. Q. B. 23. Gibson v. Cooke, 20 Pick. 18; Exchange Bk. v. Rice, 107 Mass. 37; Fithian v. Monks, 43 Mo. 503. As to novation,

³ Wilson v. Wilson, 3 Binn. 557. see *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

⁴ Ashby v. Ashby, 7 B. & C. 444; Powell v. Graham, 7 Taunt. 586; see Dowse v. Coxe, 3 Bing. 20.

⁵ See *supra*, §§ 506-7; *infra*, § 794; Leake, 2d ed. 115; Dicey on Parties, 93; Williams v. Everett, 14 East, 582;

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 115, citing Moore v. Bushell, 27 L. J. Ex. 3. See *supra*, §§ 506-7; *infra*, § 794.

⁷ Hill v. Royds, L. R. 8 Eq. 290.

⁸ Malcolm v. Scott, 5 Exch. 601; Brind v. Hampshire, 1 M. & W. 365;

mitted to B. a bank note, endorsed "pay to the order of B. under provision for my note in favor of C., payable at the house of B., on 1st January, 1830;" and B. received the proceeds of the note, but refused to pay them over to C.; it was held that C. could not maintain an action for money had and received against B., because B. had never agreed to hold the money for C.'s benefit.¹ To entitle the remittee to recover, the depositor should, it has been held, have lost control over the deposit.² But the undertaking may be made by the depositary to the depositor as agent for the party in whose favor the deposit was made. In this case there is liability from the depositary to the party beneficially interested.³ And when the party accepting the deposit has entered into an engagement to hold for the remittee, then the remittee may maintain the suit.⁴—That when A. is indebted to B. and B. is indebted to C., A.'s debt may by an agreement between A., B., and C., be placed to the credit of C., was asserted by Buller, J., in an early case;⁵ and has been since then recognized as settled law.⁶ Such an arrangement is virtually a novation; a new contract being formed on a sufficient consideration, and the old contract being extinguished.⁷—As has been already seen,⁸ it is held in England, and in several states in this country, that

Carey v. Adkins, 4 Camp. 93; Tiernan v. Jackson, 5 Pet. 580; Carnegie v. Morrison, 2 Met. 396. See, however, discussion *infra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

¹ Wedlake v. Hurley, 1 C. & J. 83, *aff. Williams v. Everett*, 14 East, 582; Gibson v. Minet, R. & M. 68.

² Seaman v. Whitney, 24 Wend. 260.

³ Wh. on Agency, §§ 4, 5, 147, 398; *supra*, § 723; *infra*, § 794. See Lilly v. Hays, 5 A. & E. 548.

In Surtees v. Hubbard, 4 Esp. 203, Lord Ellenborough says: "Choses in action are not generally assignable. Where a party entitled to money assigns over his interest to another, the mere act of assignment does not entitle the assignee to maintain an action for it. The debtor may refuse his assent; he may have an account against the as-

signor, and wish to have his set-off; but if there is anything like an assent on the part of the holder of the money, in that case I think that this, which is an equitable action" (money had and received), "is maintainable."

See Jones v. Carter, 8 Q. B. 134. That there must be an acknowledgment between the parties to constitute a contractual relation, see Noble v. Discount Co., 5 H. & N. 225; Cuxon v. Chadley, 3 B. & C. 591.

⁴ Griffin v. Weatherby, L. R. 3 Q. B. 753; Walker v. Rostron, 9 M. & W. 411; Cobb v. Becke, 6 Q. B. 930; Wyman v. Smith, 2 Sandf. 331.

⁵ Tatlock v. Harris, 3 T. R. 180.

⁶ See *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Supra*, § 506; and see *infra*, § 784.

there must be a contractual relation, express or implied, between the plaintiff and the defendant, to sustain the suit. Thus, it was held in Massachusetts in 1880, that F., a party who receives money as his own from an executor who pays it under a mistake to F. instead of to L., cannot be made liable, in an action for money had and received, to L., the person entitled under the will to receive the money.¹ On the other hand, the opinion which, however unsustained in principle, is now accepted in most jurisdictions in this country, is that where A. gives money to B., to which C. is entitled, and for C.'s use, suit may be brought for this money by C.² Hence, it was held in Michigan in 1880, that where an arrangement was made whereby E. was to deduct from the wages of his workmen the amount due for goods sold them by S.; but E., after making the deduction, refused to pay over the amount to S., S. might maintain an action for money had and received on the agreement against E.³

§ 729. When money is deposited with a stakeholder, he is not liable in an action for money had and received until the contingency happens upon which the money is payable, unless such contingency be no longer possible, in which case the money is payable to the party depositing it, if not otherwise provided by the agreement under which the deposit is made.⁴ An auctioneer is thus bound with regard to a deposit received by him at an auction. If the sale is perfected, it goes to make up the purchase money. But if the sale be not perfected, and it is not by the terms of sale applicable to costs, it may be recovered back by the depositor in an action for money had and received.⁵ If a wager be illegal, either party may claim his

¹ Moore v. Moore, 127 Mass. 22.
² *Infra*, § 785.
³ Donkersley v. Levy, 38 Mich. 54.
⁴ *Supra*, §§ 593 et seq.; Leake, 2d ed. 116; Brown v. Overbury, 11 Ex. 715; Dines v. Wolfe, L. R. 2 P. C. 280; Eltham v. Kingsman, 1 B. & Ald. 683; Smith v. Briggs, 3 Denio, 73. That the stakeholder cannot set up in de-

fence a payment in violation of his instructions, see Cowling v. Beachum, 7 Moore, 465; Wilkinson v. Godefroy, 9 A. & E. 536.

⁵ Edwards v. Hodding, 5 Taunt. 815; Duncan v. Cafe, 2 M. & W. 244; Harrington v. Hoggart, 1 B. & Ad. 586; Spittle v. Lavender, 5 Moore, 270.

deposit before it is paid over,¹ even though the party claiming is the losing party to the illegal wager to meet which the money was deposited.² At common law, where a stakeholder in an illegal wager has paid the deposit to the winner, before notice or demand, the loser cannot recover from the stakeholder;³ though it may be recovered from the winner.⁴ But in New York if the suit be special under the statute, the loser can recover the deposit from the stakeholder even after the deposit has been paid over to the winner.⁵ *A fortiori* he may recover it in the hands of a mere depositary.⁶ Under the statute 8 & 9 Vict. ch. 109, no suit can be maintained for the recovery of money deposited to abide the result of a wager. And generally money paid on gambling debts cannot be recovered back.⁷—In a suit for money had and received against a stakeholder, the court will mould the execution in such a way as to best subserve the equity of the case.⁸

II. MONEY WRONGFULLY OBTAINED.

§ 730. A party who has been wrongfully dispossessed of his money or goods by another may either sue in tort, claiming damages for the injury sustained by him, or, electing to repudiate the sale, he may sue the wrong-doer on an implied contract, alleging a receiving of money to the plaintiff's use. Thus money obtained from A. by B. by false pretences

Money wrongfully obtained may be sued for as money received to plaintiff's use.

¹ *Gatty v. Field*, 9 Q. B. 431; *Hastellon v. Jackson*, 8 B. & C. 221; *Eltham v. Kingsman*, 1 B. & Ald. 683; see *Phillips v. Ives*, 1 Rawle, 36; *supra*, § 452.

² *Supra*, § 454; *Cotton v. Thurland*, 5 T. R. 405; *Martin v. Hewson*, 10 Exch. 737; *Manning v. Purcell*, 7 De G. M. & G. 55; see *White v. Bank*, 22 Pick. 189; *Ball v. Gilbert*, 12 Met. 397; *Vischer v. Yeates*, 11 John. 23; *Rust v. Gott*, 9 Cow. 169; *Like v. Thompson*, 9 Barb. 315; *Livingstone v. Wootan*, 1 N. & McC. 178. As to distinctive statutes on betting, see *supra*, § 452.

³ *Howson v. Hancock*, 8 T. R. 575; *Perkins v. Eaton*, 3 N. H. 152; *Worcester v. Eaton*, 11 Mass. 375; *McCullum v. Gourlay*, 8 Johns. 147. As to wagers, see more fully *supra*, §§ 352, 449 *et seq.*

⁴ *McKee v. Manice*, 11 Cush. 357.

⁵ *Ruckman v. Pitcher*, 1 Comst. 392; S. C., 20 N. Y. 9; *Like v. Thompson*, 9 Barb. 315.

⁶ *Woodworth v. Bennett*, 43 N. Y. 273; see for cases in other states, *supra*, § 452.

⁷ *Supra*, § 452.

⁸ *Aycinena v. Peries*, 6 W. & S. 243; S. C., 2 Barr, 286.

may be recovered back as money received by B. to A.'s use;¹ A. offering to return to B. whatever he had received from B. in exchange.² Money, also, received by means of forgery can in this way be recovered back, although there was no contract of any kind between the parties;³ and so of an overpayment induced by a vendor's deceit;⁴ and so of money obtained by imposition,⁵ or by any other tort.⁶ An insurance company, in accordance with the rule above stated, may sue in this form of action to recover back the amount paid on a loss, when the policy was avoided by fraudulent representations as to the extent of the loss; nor need the company return the receipt for the amount so paid before bringing suit.⁷ In this form of suit all special damages are waived, and the plaintiff's claim

¹ *Supra*, §§ 282, 520; Leake, 2d ed. 90; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 452; Oakes v. Turquand, L. R. 2 H. L. 325; Street v. Blay, 2 B. & Ad. 456; Gompertz v. Denton, 1 C. & M. 207; Holt v. Ely, 1 E. & B. 795; Edmeads v. Newman, 1 B. & C. 418; Martin v. Morgan, 1 B. & B. 289; Farris v. Ware, 60 Me. 482; Manahan v. Noyes, 52 N. H. 232; Gates v. Bliss, 43 Vt. 299; Ripley v. Gelston, 9 John. 201; Tugman v. Steamship Co., 76 N. Y. 207; Willet v. Willet, 3 Watts, 277; Matthews v. Pearson, 13 S. & R. 258; Pierce v. Wilson, 34 Ala. 596; O'Conley v. Natchez, 1 Sm. & M. 31; see Higgins v. Mendenhall, 51 Iowa, 135.

² Clarke v. Dickson, E. B. & E. 148; Norton v. Young, 3 Greenl. 30; Cushing v. Wyman, 38 Me. 589; Getchell v. Chase, 37 N. H. 110; Downer v. Smith, 32 Vt. 1; Perkins v. Bailey, 99 Mass. 61; Hoopes v. Strasburger, 37 Md. 390; Shaw v. Barnhart, 17 Ind. 183; Haase v. Mitchell, 58 Ind. 213; Warren v. Tyler, 81 Ill. 15; see more fully *supra*, §§ 282, 520 *et seq.*

³ Marsh v. Keating, 1 Bing. N. C. 198; Ripley v. Gelston, 9 Johns. 201; Beardslee v. Richardson, 11 Wend. 25.

⁴ Bernard v. Colwell, 39 Mich. 215.

⁵ O'Conley v. Natchez, 1 Sm. & M. 31.

⁶ Pratt v. Vizard, 5 B. & Ad. 808; Richardson v. Kimball, 28 Me. 463; Miller v. Miller, 7 Pick. 133; Gilmore v. Wilbur, 12 Pick. 120; Stockett v. Watkins, 2 Gill & J. 326; see Lane v. Smith, 68 Me. 178. In Smart v. White, 73 Me. 332, it was held that money received from a United States pensioner in excess of the statutory allowance for services in obtaining a pension may be recovered of the taker by the pensioner, although obtained from him without any wrongful intention, irrespective of the question whether the pensioner when paying or allowing the sum knew of the statutory protection or not. The defendant is not screened from liability because he was an agent merely, and had paid the money to his principal before suit brought or demand made upon him. He is a principal in perpetrating the wrong. See further *supra*, § 353, as to effect of complicity in such cases. That money obtained by duress can be recovered back, see *supra*, § 144.

⁷ Johnson v. Ins. Co., 39 Mich. 33.

reduced exclusively and finally to money had and received.¹—A party who has obtained that which it is his duty to pay over to another, cannot set up that the reception was by his own wrong. In other words he cannot say, “I got it by a tort, and in tort alone can I be sued.” Thus when a broker employed to sell a ship improperly received commissions from the purchaser, it was held that the vendor, the broker’s principal, might recover of the broker the commissions the broker received, there being no custom by which commissions of this kind were sustained.²—All profits which an agent makes out of the trust business, no matter how improperly, belong to his principal, nor can he set up against his principal the impropriety of the transaction.³—And where an apprentice is inveigled away from his master, and his services obtained by a third party, the master can recover the value of these services from the third party, nor can the latter set up the tortious character of the transaction, and claim that he is to be sued in tort alone. The tort can be waived by the master and the implied contract sued on.⁴ Nor is it a defence to such a suit that the defendant did not know that the party employed was an apprentice.⁵

§ 731. If A.’s property is wrongfully sold by B., A., waiving the tort, may sue for the proceeds in B.’s hands, as money received to A.’s use; and this applies to a sale of real property,⁶ as well as of personal,⁷ as where coal is wrongfully severed and sold by the

A. may recover proceeds of his property wrongfully sold by B.

¹ *Lythgoe v. Vernon*, 5 H. & N. 180; 352, 357 for authorities; *Lightly v. Brown v. Holbrook*, 4 Gray, 102; *Clouston*, 1 Taunt. 112; *Foster v. Wilder v. Aldrich*, 2 R. I. 518. As generally sustaining the text, see *Stewart*, 3 M. & S. 191; see *Peters v. Lord*, 18 Conn. 337.

Mathers v. Pearson, 13 S. & R. 258; ⁵ *Bowes v. Tibbetts*, 7 Greenl. 457; *Vantine v. Wood*, 13 Penn. St. 270; *Munsey v. Goodwin*, 3 N. H. 272; *Shaffer v. Montgomery*, 65 Penn. St. 329. *James v. LeRoy*, 6 Johns. 274; 2 *Parsons*, 52.

² *Morrison v. Thompson*, L. R. 9 Q. B. 480; *Dutton v. Wilbur*, 52 N. Y. 312; *Dodd v. Workman*, 26 N. J. Eq. 484; *Love v. Hoss*, 62 Ind 255. ⁶ *Morgan v. Elford*, L. R. 4 C. D. 352; *Miller v. Miller*, 7 Pick. 136.

³ *Wh. on Agency*, §§ 232, 236, 244, 335, 716. ⁷ *Leake*, 2d ed. 93; *Dicey on Parties*, 91; *Collins v. Brook*, 5 H. & N. 700;

⁴ *Wh. on Agency*, §§ 232, 236, 244, 335, 716. *Holt v. Ely*, 1 E. & B. 795; *Burnap v. Partridge*, 3 Vt. 144.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 61; see *supra*, §§

owner of an adjacent mine,¹ and where trees on the plaintiff's land are wrongfully cut down and sold.²

§ 732. It is a false pretence, as is elsewhere shown, for a party to obtain money or goods from a bailee or other agent on the allegation of being sent for by the real owner.³ Hence, as a party obtaining money on false pretences may be charged with receiving such money to the owner's use, money thus obtained fraudulently from a third person may be recovered by the owner.⁴ And a party collecting rents on color of agency for the landlord, may be compelled to pay the money so received over to the landlord in an action for money had and received;⁵ though, if the money be received on claim of adverse title, the suit in this shape does not lie, as the reception was adverse, and not on pretence of agency.⁶ Wherever, as a general rule, the defendant receives money he knows belongs to the plaintiff, he is bound to pay such money to the plaintiff.⁷ But mere complicity in a criminal act does not make all parties concerned liable, in an action of this kind, to refund to parties injured any sums the latter may have lost by such guilty act. The defendant, to sustain such a suit, must be shown to have received money which had been acquired from the plaintiff, or to have been received ostensibly to the plaintiff's use.⁸

§ 733. Money, however, received by false pretences or false personation, cannot be followed into the hands of strangers

¹ Ibid.; Powell v. Rees, 7 A. & E. 600; Connecticut R. R. v. Newell, 31 426; Phillips v. Homfray, L. R. 6 Ch. Vt. 364; James v. Hodsden, 47 Vt. 127; 770; Ashton v. Stock, L. R. 6 C. D. and see *supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*; and see, 719; see Haygarth v. Wearing, L. R. as to frauds generally, §§ 232 *et seq.* 12 Eq. 320.

² Hambly v. Trott, 1 Cowp. 376; Clarence v. Marshall, 2 C. & M. 495. Powell v. Layton, 2 B. & P. N. R. 370.

³ See Wh. Cr. L. 8th ed. § 1142; v. Upsall, L. R. 4 C. D. 144. see *supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*

⁴ Litt v. Martindale, 18 C. B. 314; 16 M. & W. 128; Freeman v. Otis, 9 Andrews v. Hawley, 26 L. J. Ex. 323; Mass. 272; Hall v. Marston, 17 Mass. cited Leake, 2d ed. 90; Abbotts v. 579.

Barry, 2 Brod. & B. 369; Herrin v. ⁵ National Trust Co. v. Gleason, 77 Libby, 36 Me. 350; Hall v. Gilmore, 40 N. Y. 400.

Me. 578; Christmas v. Spink, 15 Ohio,

when such strangers have obtained possession of it *bona fide*, and for a good consideration.¹ It is otherwise, as to parties with notice, parties acting as agents or confederates of the wrong-doer, and parties who are not purchasers for value.²—The party obtaining the money fraudulently cannot by any device pass title to his assignee with notice;³ and the burden is on the holder to prove good faith and fairness.⁴—Where a purchaser of a promissory note, purporting to be endorsed by a savings bank, sues the bank on the alleged endorsement, he ratifies the purchase which he cannot afterwards attack as fraudulent; nor can he, in the same action, recover, under a count for money had and received, on the ground of fraud in the endorsement.⁵

Such money cannot be pursued into hands of strangers.

§ 734. We have already seen that no title to goods passes when only a bare charge is given to the transferee, and that no title passes by goods obtained by false personation.⁶ It may be added that with the single exception in England of sales in market overt, goods can, if no title be transferred, be followed into the hands even of parties without notice; or, in case of their sale by such parties, their price may be recovered by the owner.⁷ In this country, the exception of market overt does not exist.⁸ Negotiable paper, taken *bona fide* before maturity, does not fall within this rule.⁹ And ordinarily a person not taking

Goods fraudulently obtained may be followed into other hands.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 91; Bigelow on Fraud, 308; Foster v. Green, 7 H. & N. 881; Hoffman v. Noble, 6 Met. 68; Ball v. Shell, 21 Wend. 222; Thompson v. Lee, 3 W. & S. 479; Thorpe v. Beavans, 73 N. C. 241.

² Ibid.; Atlee v. Backhouse, 3 M. & W. 633; Calland v. Loyd, 6 M. & W. 26; Pickett v. Barron, 29 Barb. 505; Blanchard v. Tyler, 12 Mich. 339.

³ *Supra*, § 292; Moody v. Blake, 117 Mass. 23; and cases cited in next section.

⁴ Easter v. Allen, 8 Allen, 7; Hoffman v. Strohecker, 9 Watts, 183. As to title of *bona fide* purchasers, see

supra, §§ 211, 291, 347, 352, 376. That persons without title cannot pass title, see *supra*, § 292.

⁵ Tappan v. Bank, 127 Mass. 107.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 182–3, 292.

⁷ Bigelow on Fraud, 308; Glyn v. Baker, 13 East, 509; Kinder v. Shaw, 2 Mass. 398; Towne v. Collins, 14 Mass. 500; Williams v. Merle, 11 Wend. 80; see *supra*, § 183; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. §§ 7, 433.

⁸ Ventress v. Smith, 10 Pet. 176; Dame v. Baldwin, 8 Mass. 518; Easton v. Worthington, 5 S. & R. 130; Roland v. Gundy, 5 Ohio, 202.

⁹ Leake, 2d ed. 95; *supra*, § 539.

title cannot pass title, even to a *bona fide* purchaser for value.¹—The process for recovery of a chattel under such circumstances must be *in rem*. It cannot be for money had and received.²

§ 735. As is the case with election to rescind,³ an election to waive the tort, in cases of this class, and sue on the contract, when once made, is final.⁴ The election is evidenced by bringing a suit for the proceeds.⁵

“The law is clear that a person who is entitled to complain of a conversion of his property, but who prefers to waive the tort, may do so, and bring his action for money had and received for the proceeds of goods wrongfully sold. The law implies, under such circumstances, a promise on the part of the tort-feasor that he will pay over the proceeds of the sale to the rightful owner. But if an action for money had and received is so brought, that is in point of law a conclusive election to waive the tort; and so the commencement of an action of trespass or trover is a conclusive election the other way.”⁶ Part reception of the proceeds, also, is a waiver of the tort; and the only remedy for the recovery of the residue is an action for money had and received.⁷

§ 736. When goods have been unlawfully obtained by B. and sold, A. may elect to waive the tort and to sue B. for the price as for money had and received.⁸ And a party *bona fide* purchasing lost or stolen goods is liable in trover to the original owner, or he may be liable for the price received by him for them, if

¹ *Supra*, §§ 183 *et seq.*, 292; *Hardman v. Booth*, 1 Hurl. & C. 803; *Lindsay v. Cundy*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 96; *Moody v. Blake*, 117 Mass. 23; *Wheelwright v. Depeyster*, 1 Johns. 471. As to goods transferred on bill of lading see *infra*, § 793.

² *Ibid.* *Infra*, § 736; *supra*, § 728.

³ *Supra*, § 290.

⁴ *Leake*, 2d ed. 94; *Bigelow on Fraud*, 403; *Abbotts v. Barry*, 2 Brod. & B. 869; *Hitchcock v. Covill*, 20 Wend. 167; 23 Wend. 611.

⁵ See *Panama Tel. Co. v. India Rub.*

Co., L. R. 10 Ch. 515, cited *supra*, § 583; *Christmas v. Spink*, 15 Ohio, 600.

⁶ *Bovill, C. J.*, *Smith v. Baker*, L. R. 8 C. P. 350.

⁷ *Lythgoe v. Vernon*, 5 H. & N. 180.

⁸ *Bigelow on Fraud*, 461; *Leake*, 2d ed. 91; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 6, 13; *Marsh v. Keating*, 1 Bing. N. C. 215; *Rodgers v. Maw*, 15 M. & W. 448; *Thurston v. Blanchard*, 22 Pick. 18; *Stanley v. Gaylord*, 1 Cush. 536; *Moody v. Blake*, 117 Mass. 23; *Barrett v. Warren*, 3 Hill, 348; *Heastings v. McGee*, 66 Penn. St. 354.

he has resold them.¹ Hence, where a power of attorney to sell stock was forged by one of a partnership, and the proceeds paid to the account of the partnership, it was held that the owner of the stock might recover the proceeds from the partnership as money had and received to his use.² An auctioneer, also, who innocently and ignorantly buys and sells stolen goods, is liable to the rightful owner in trover without a previous demand.³ A party, also, knowingly receiving partnership funds from a partner, is liable in money had and received to the firm.⁴ But a suit of this kind does not lie to recover the value of goods taken under a claim of right, when there has been no conversion.⁵ Nor can real actions be tried in this way.⁶

§ 737. When money is obtained by coercion or extortion, the acquiescence thus secured is a nullity,⁷ and the money may be recovered back in an action for money had and received to the plaintiff's use.⁸ Duress of goods, inducing the owner to pay money to release such goods, will be a basis for such a suit.

Money obtained by extortion can be recovered back.

"If a party has in his possession goods or other property belonging to another, and refuses to deliver such property to that other, unless the latter pays him a sum of money which he has no right to receive; and the latter, in order to obtain possession of his property pays that sum; the money so paid is a payment made by compulsion, and may be recovered back."⁹ Hence when a mortgagor, with absolute power of

¹ *Clarke v. Dixon*, E. B. & E. 148; *Lee v. Bayes*, 18 C. B. 599; *Thnrston v. Blanchard*, 22 Pick. 18; *Heckle v. Lurvey*, 101 Mass. 344; *Hoffman v. Carow*, 20 Wend. 21; *Roland v. Gundy*, 5 Ohio, 202; *Beazley v. Mitchell*, 9 Ala. 780; *Weed v. Page*, 7 Wis. 503.

² *Stone v. Marsh*, 6 B. & C. 551.

³ *Hoffman v. Carew*, 20 Wend. 21; S. C., 22 Wend. 285. Mr. Parsons (Cont. i. 520) says of this ruling that it "is certainly very severe." See *Courtis v. Cane*, 32 Vt. 232; *Hills v. Snell*, 104 Mass. 177; *Pease v. Smith*, 61 N. Y. 477.

⁴ *Croughton v. Forrest*, 17 Mo. 131.

⁵ *Supra*, § 734; *Bethlehem v. Fire Co.*, 81 Penn. St. 445; see *Pearsoll v. Chapin*, 44 Penn. St. 9.

⁶ *Lewis v. Robinson*, 10 Watts, 338.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 144 *et seq.*, 149, 353.

⁸ *Oates v. Hudson*, 6 Exch. 346; *Chase v. Dwinal*, 7 Greenl. 134; *Worcester v. Eaton*, 11 Mass. 376; *Carey v. Prentice*, 1 Root, 91; *Ripley v. Gels-ton*, 9 Johns. 201; *Foshay v. Ferguson*, 5 Hill, 158; *supra*, § 353.

⁹ *Bayley, J., Shaw v. Woodcock*, 7 B. & C. 84, adopted *Leake*, 2d ed. 96; as illustrations see *Pratt v. Vizard*, 5 B. & Ad. 808; *Wakefield v. Newton*, 6 Q. B. 276; *Maxwell v. Griswold*, 10.

sale, threatens to use such power unless he be overpaid, the overpayment may be recovered back in an action for money had and received.¹ And money paid under duress of person, as by a false arrest, can be recovered back.² Duress of goods, however, though it may be the basis of a suit to recover back money paid to be relieved of it, will not be sufficient to avoid a contract induced by it; nor does mere fear of legal procedure have that effect.³—Excess of interest received on a usurious loan can, by this form of action, be recovered back when the plaintiff's necessity was operated on by the defendant so as to enforce the usurious terms;⁴ though it is held in Massachusetts, under the revised statutes, that excess of interest cannot be in this way recovered back.⁵

§ 738. As has been already noticed,⁶ a common carrier is regarded as so far a public officer that excessive payments extorted by him can be recovered back in an action for money had and received;⁷ and this is eminently the case with railway companies when imposing unequal and extortionate charges.⁸ A hotel keeper may be viewed in the same light; and if he makes an extortionate charge, money paid him under protest to meet such charge may be recovered back.⁹ Excessive fees extorted

How. 242; *Clinton v. Strong*, 9 Johns. 370; *Briggs v. Boyd*, 56 N. Y. 289; *Baldwin v. S. S. Co.*, 74 N. Y. 125; *Pemberton v. Williams*, 87 Ill. 15; *Schultz v. Culbertson*, 46 Wis. 313; *Kiewert v. Rindskopf*, 46 Wis. 481; *Sasportas v. Jennings*, 1 Bay, 470; *Collins v. Westburg*, 2 Bay, 211; and see cases cited *supra*, § 149.

¹ *Close v. Phipps*, 7 M. & G. 586. Money paid, however, as a matter of compromise, cannot be recovered back, *supra*, §§ 150, 486.

² *De Mesnil v. Dakin*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 18.

³ *Supra*, §§ 149, 150; *infra*, § 740.

⁴ *Williams v. Hedley*, 8 East, 383; *Smith v. Bromley*, 2 Dougl. 697; *Pierce v. Conant*, 25 Me. 33; *Willie v. Green*, 2 N. H. 333; *Boardman v. Roe*, 13 Mass. 105; *Wheaton v. Hibbard*, 20

Johns. 290; *Bond v. Jones*, 8 Sm. & M. 368.

⁶ *Crosby v. Bennett*, 7 Met. 17.

⁷ *Supra*, § 149.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 99; *Ashmole v. Wainwright*, 2 Q. B. 837; *Tamva Co. v. Simpson*, 19 C. B. N. S. 453; and cases cited, *supra*, § 149.

⁹ *Parker v. R. R.*, 7 M. & G. 253; *Great West. R. R. v. Sutton*, L. R. 4 H. L. 226; *Lancashire R. R. v. Gidlow*, L. R. 7 H. L. 527; *Evershed v. R. R.*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 254; *Baxendale v. R. R.*, 14 C. B. N. S. 1; 16 C. B. N. S. 137; *Garton v. R. R.*, 28 L. J. Ex. 169; *Harmony v. Bingham*, 12 N. Y. 99.

¹⁰ *Lugard v. Biggs*, 1881, *Grove and Lopes*, JJ. Of this case the *London Law Times* of Dec. 24, 1881, thus speaks: "The plaintiff, who was an

by public officers can in like manner be recovered back.¹ This has been held to be the case with respect to taxes wrongfully assessed and paid under protest to a collector who is authorized by law to levy directly on all persons whose names are on the tax list.² But this does not apply to a payment on a claim whose defects consist simply in informalities.³ Nor can taxes illegally assessed be recovered back if paid voluntarily and without protest.⁴ It was held, also, in Pennsylvania in

officer in the army, had been staying at the defendant's hotel for some days at the time of the late Windsor review. When his bill was presented to him for payment prior to his departure, he complained of the charges, but the defendant refused to alter them. The plaintiff then paid the bill under protest, and subsequently brought an action to recover the amount of the overcharges. At the trial the county court judge found as a fact that the charges were excessive; and he also held, as a matter of law, that the plaintiff must be considered to have known that the defendant could, if he wished, have detained his luggage supposing he had refused to pay the bill. No evidence, however, was offered to show that the plaintiff, at the time of the dispute about the amount of the charges in the bill, had any luggage on the defendant's premises, or that the defendant either detained or made any threat to detain the plaintiff's luggage if he refused to pay those charges. On these facts the case came before justices Grove and Lopes, who held that the plaintiff was entitled to recover the amount of the overcharges sued for by him. This decision we venture to think goes very much further than any decided case has yet gone."

¹ *Supra*, § 149; *Morgan v. Palmer*, 2 B. & C. 729; *Woodgate v. Knatchbull*, 2 T. R. 148; *Dew v. Parsons*, 2 B. & Ald. 563; *Steele v. Williams*, 8 Ex. 625; *Barnes v. Brathwaite*, 2 H. & N.

569; *Railroad Co. v. Commis.*, 98 U. S. 541; *Riley v. Willis*, 5 Whart. 145; *American Steamship Co. v. Young*, 89 Penn. St. 186; *Baker v. Cincinnati*, 11 Oh. St. 534; *Robinson v. Ezzell*, 72 N. C. 231; *supra*, § 149.

² *Supra*, § 149; *Cooley on Taxation*, 368; *Chase v. Dwinal*, 7 Greenl. 134; *Amesbury Man. Co. v. Amesbury*, 17 Mass. 461; *Preston v. Boston*, 12 Pick. 7; *Boston Glass Co. v. Boston*, 4 Met. 181; *Dow v. Sudbury*, 5 Met. 73; *Christ Ch. Hosp. v. Phil. Co.*, 24 Penn. St. 229; *Tenbrook v. Phil.*, 7 Phil. 105; *Harvey v. Olney*, 42 Ill. 336; *Elston v. Chicago*, 40 Ill. 514; *Parcher v. Marathan Co.*, 52 Wis. 388; *Quinnett v. Washington*, 10 Mo. 53; and see cases cited, *supra*, § 149.

³ *Fellows v. School Dist.*, 39 Me. 559.

⁴ *Lackey v. Mercer Co.*, 9 Barr, 318; *Allentown v. Saeger*, 20 Penn. St. 421; *Taylor v. Board*, 31 Penn. St. 73. See 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 943, citing *Ripley v. Gelston*, 9 Johns. 201, and *Clinton v. Strong*, 9 Johns. 370. In *Ripley v. Gelston* the plaintiff was held entitled to recover in this form of action money illegally extorted by the collector of the port of New York as tonnage, a clearance of the vessel being refused until the money was paid. In *Clinton v. Strong*, the plaintiff was held entitled to recover back money which the clerk of the district court illegally required to be paid as a condition of the surrender of plaintiff's property improperly seized, and see *supra*, § 149.

1880, that an extortionate charge by a federal shipping commissioner, by which a seaman is compelled to pay a shipping fee every time he reships on the same vessel, may be recovered back in an action for money had and received.¹ And generally that which is unlawfully extorted can be thus recovered back.² But there can be no recovery back in Pennsylvania of taxes paid under protest when the party paying does not avail himself of his remedy of appeal.³

§ 739. Where A.'s goods are wrongfully seized under an execution against B., A. can recover the proceeds of the sale from the sheriff or other officer levying the execution.⁴ A bankrupt assignee, also, may sue the sheriff for the proceeds of goods sold by the sheriff on an execution levied after an act of bankruptcy.⁵

§ 740. Where money is regularly obtained by legal process, in a court having jurisdiction, against a particular defendant, it cannot be recovered back in a suit by the original defendant against the original plaintiff for money had and received, no matter how erroneous the judgment of the court may have been on the merits. The remedy is to have the judgment, in such case, reversed or set aside; and if this cannot be done, then there is no relief.⁶ The same rule applies to money paid under an award of arbitrators.⁷ It is otherwise, however, when

¹ *American Steamship Co. v. Young*, 89 Penn. St. 186.

² *Supra*, § 149; *Smith v. Bromley*, 2 Doug. 696; *Smith v. Cuff*, 6 M. & S. 160.

³ *Wharton v. Birmingham*, 37 Penn. St. 371.

⁴ *Oughten v. Loppings*, 1 B. & Ad. 241; *supra*, §§ 144 *et seq.*; and see *Kitchen v. Campbell*, 3 Wilson, 304.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 92; *Balme v. Hutton*, 9 Bing. 471; *Rocke ex parte*, L. R. 6 Ch. 795; *Graham v. Chapman*, 12 C. B. 85; *Mitchell v. Winslow*, 2 Story, 630; *Steene v. Aylesworth*, 18 Conn. 244.

⁶ *Supra*, § 150; *Wh. on Ev.* § 758 *et*

seq.; *Leake*, 2d ed. 98; *Marriott v. Hampton*, 7 T. R. 269; *Habberton v. Wakefield*, 4 Camp. 58; *De Medina v. Grove*, 10 Q. B. 152; *Belcher v. Mills*, 2 C. M. & R. 150; *Morton v. Chandler*, 7 Greenl. 45; *Strong v. McConnell*, 10 Vt. 232; *Loring v. Mansfield*, 17 Mass. 394; *Nettleton v. Beach*, 107 Mass. 499; *Carter v. Canterbury*, 3 Conn. 461; *Walker v. Ames*, 2 Cow. 428; *Finnel v. Brew*, 81 Penn. St. 362; *Federal Ins. Co. v. Robinson*, 82 Penn. St. 357; *Job v. Collier*, 11 Ohio, 422; *Mitchell v. Sandford*, 11 Ala. 695.

⁷ *Homes v. Aery*, 12 Mass. 134; *Bulkley v. Stewart*, 1 Day, 130.

the court of procedure had no jurisdiction, or where the goods of the party aggrieved were taken in mistake for the goods of another person;¹ and so when money has been collected on a satisfied judgment.² But a party cannot shelter himself from payment of money improperly detained by him by setting up a judgment in which the issue was not directly determined.³ Thus, where an attorney-at-law having received a part payment on a note placed in his hands for collection, after having paid over the amount so received to the creditor, obtained judgment for the whole amount, it was held that the attorney was liable in this form of action to the original debtor for the excess thus collected.⁴—Money paid under a judgment that is finally reversed or annulled can in this way be recovered back,⁵ nor is it necessary that the original payment should have been coerced by execution.⁶—What has been said with regard to money obtained by legal process may be said with regard to threatened legal proceedings. A party who pays even an unfounded claim under threat of *bona fide* legal proceedings, cannot, with the exceptions previously noticed, supposing him to have had a full knowledge of the facts of the case, recover back the money so paid.⁷

§ 741. As we have already seen, money which has been paid for an illegal purpose cannot be recovered back when the purpose has been put in operation.⁸ It is otherwise as to money paid on an executory illegal agreement when the party suing is not implicated in a continuous criminal design.⁹ That (independently of statute) money paid on a gambling debt cannot be recov-

Money paid for illegal purposes cannot be recovered back.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 150, 739; *Snowdon v. Davis*, 1 Taunt. 359; *Valpy v. Manley*, 1 C. B. 594.

² *Wisner v. Bulkley*, 15 Wend. 321.

³ See *Snow v. Prescott*, 12 N. H. 535.

⁴ *Fowler v. Shearer*, 7 Mass. 14.

⁵ *Stevens v. Fitch*, 11 Met. 248; *Sturges v. Allis*, 10 Wend. 354; *Marghee v. Kellogg*, 24 Wend. 32; *Clark v. Pinney*, 6 Cow. 297; *Duncan v. Kirkpatrick*, 13 S. & R. 292; and cases cited 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 947.

⁶ *Scholey v. Halsey*, 72 N. Y. 578.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 198, 532-4, 740; *Brown v. McKinally*, 1 Esp. 279; *Lothian v. Henderson*, 3 B. & P. 520; *Graham v. Tate*, 1 M. & S. 610; *Skyring v. Greenwood*, 4 B. & C. 290; *Fellows v. School Dist.*, 39 Me. 559; *Cunningham v. Boston*, 15 Gray, 468; *Wilde v. Baker*, 14 Allen, 349; and other cases cited 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 934.

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 340 *et seq.*

⁹ *Supra*, §§ 354-5; *Kiewert v. Rindskopf*, 46 Wis. 481.

ered back, has been already seen.¹—When there has been a rescission of an illegal contract, and an agreement that the money paid on it should be returned, an action for money had and received lies on this agreement.²—The mere fact that a lender is cognizant of the fact that the money is to be applied to an illegal purpose does not preclude him from recovering back.³

III. MONEY PAID WITHOUT CONSIDERATION.

§ 742. When there has been a total failure of consideration, or where a contract has been abandoned on both sides, or has been rescinded, an action lies for money had and received to recover back any money either paid the other in furtherance of the contract.⁴ Hence when subscriptions are paid into a business adventure, and this adventure is abandoned before the shares are distributed and the risks begun, the party paying in the subscription may recover it back as money had and received.⁵ This has been held to be the case in England with regard to money paid as a deposit on application for shares in a company which is abandoned before an allotment of shares;⁶ and so with respect to money paid for allotments which were held to be *ultra vires*, and which could not therefore be perfected.⁷

¹ *Supra*, § 454.

² *Lea v. Cassen*, 61 Ala. 312. As to rescission, see *supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*

³ *Supra*, § 343; *Williams v. Carr*, 80 N. C. 294.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 48 *a*, 282, 520; *Payne v. Whale*, 7 East, 274; *Danforth v. Dewey*, 3 N. H. 79; *Cooper v. Newman*, 45 N. H. 339; *Raymond v. Bearnard*, 12 Johns. 275; *Lindsley v. Ferguson*, 49 N. Y. 625; *Feay v. DeCamp*, 15 S. & R. 227; *Thompson v. Gould*, 20 Pick. 134; *Middleport Mills v. Titus*, 35 Oh. St. 253; *Wisner v. Chicago*, 6 Ill. Ap. 254; *Johnson v. Krassin*, 25 Minn. 117; *Garber v. Armentrout*, 32 Grat. 235; *Flinn v. Barber*, 59 Ala. 446; *Sims v. Hutchins*, 8 Sm. & M. 328. In *Gist v. Smith*, 78 Ky. 367, Cofer, J., said: "Money paid upon a contract declared by statute to be void is not

paid under any contract at all; it is paid without consideration, either good or valuable, and may be recovered back unless the transaction is of such a character that the law will not aid either party, which is not the case as to one who pays usurious interest."

⁵ *Kempson v. Saunders*, 4 Bing. 5; see cases cited *supra*, §§ 519 *et seq.*

⁶ *Leake*, 2d ed. 105; *Walstab v. Spottiswoode*, 15 M. & W. 501; *Mowatt v. Londesborough*, 4 E. & B. 1; *Johnson v. Goslett*, 3 C. B. N. S. 569; *supra*, § 520.

⁷ *Alison's case*, L. R. 9 Ch. 24; *Bank of Hindustan v. Alison*, L. R. 6 C. P. 222; *Campbell ex parte*, L. R. 16 Eq. 417, 9 Ch. 1, 12; see *Rudge v. Bowman*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 689; *supra*, § 520. As to mutual subscriptions to charities, see *supra*, §§ 528 *et seq.*

And, generally, where money has been paid by the plaintiff on a contract, and before any benefit accruing to the plaintiff or detriment to the other side, the consideration wholly fails, or the contract becomes wholly inoperative, the plaintiff may recover in this form of action the money advanced by him.¹ So of agreements which are inoperative under the statute of frauds, and which the defendant refuses to perform;² and of other cases of rescission.³—A suit for money had and received lies by a purchaser after rescission of contract of sale to recover money paid as consideration for the purchase.⁴ But where a purchaser pays part of purchase-money, payable in instalments, and then rescinds, he cannot recover back what he has paid if the vendor is ready to perform his part; but if the vendor rescinds, he cannot retain the purchase-money paid.⁵—A purchaser who has made payments on a contract of sale with which the vendor has refused to comply, may recover back from the vendor the money so paid.⁶

§ 743. Whether a deposit paid on a contract for the purchase of real estate can be recovered back on the purchase falling through, depends upon the terms of the contract.⁷ Where the purchaser refuses to comply with the terms assented to by him, he cannot recover back the deposit as such, unless the agreement gives him that right, though he might have an action against the vendor for damages, if the vendor be the party primarily responsible for the failure of the negotiations. The return of the deposit, also, may be excluded by the terms of the contract.⁸ But ordinarily when the sale is not per-

Deposit on real estate may be recovered back on failure to make title.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 48 a, 282, 520; *Dutch v. Warren*, 2 Burr. 1010; *Fuller v. Little*, 7 N. H. 535; *Parish v. Stone*, 14 Pick. 210; *Dill v. Wareham*, 7 Met. 438; *Hill v. Rewee*, 11 Met. 271; *Brown v. Harris*, 2 Gray, 359; *Wheeler v. Board*, 12 Johns. 363.

² *Cobb v. Hall*, 29 Vt. 510; *Thompson v. Gould*, 20 Pick. 134; *Rice v. Peet*, 15 Johns. 503; *Abbott v. Draper*, 4 Denio, 51.

³ *Supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*, 293.

⁴ 1 Ch. on Cont. 692, 702; *Thornett v. Haines*, 15 M. & W. 367; *Whitcomb v. Denio*, 52 Vt. 382; *Bradford v. Manly*, 13 Mass. 139; *supra*, § 520.

⁵ *Davis v. Hall*, 52 Md. 673.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 579 *et seq.*; *Jellison v. Jordan*, 68 Me. 373.

⁷ See *supra*, § 520.

⁸ *Barrell ex parte*, L. R. 10 Ch. 512; *Thomas v. Brown*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 714; see *Hudson v. Swift*, 20 Johns. 24.

⁹ *Hinton v. Sparks*, L. R. 3 C. P. 161.

fectured through the vendor's fault,¹ or the contract is rescinded by the parties,² the deposit may be recovered back as money had and received.³

§ 744. A party whose name has been forged to a bill, and who pays the bill supposing it to be genuine, may recover back, on discovering the forgery, what he paid, provided there was no such negligence on his part as deprives the party whom he sues of recourse to prior parties.⁴ Money paid in discounting a bill of exchange, the acceptance of which is forged, may also be recovered back, provided there be no estoppel through negligence;⁵ and this has been held even where the defendant did not indorse the bill.⁶ There can also be a recovery in this form of action for money paid for forged railway bonds;⁷ and for money paid for foreign bonds which at the time of the sale were repudiated by the state which it was pretended had issued them.⁸ The same distinction is taken with regard to counterfeit bank notes; a party innocently paying out such being liable to the payee for their value,⁹ though the payee must offer to return the note in a reasonable time, if it be of any value, or else he cannot recover.¹⁰—When the vendor of a

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 107; *Moeser v. Wis-ker*, L. R. 6 C. P. 120; *Simmons v. Heseltine*, 5 C. B. N. S. 554.

² *Aberaman Iron Works v. Wickens*, L. R. 4 Ch. 101.

³ See *Pollock*, 476; *Towance v. Bolton*, L. R. 8 Ch. 118; *Jones v. Rimmer*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 588.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 509–11, 520; Leake, 2d ed. 107; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 423, 607, 608; *Wilkinson v. Johnson*, 3 B. & C. 428; *Cocks v. Masterman*, 9 B. & C. 902; *Bank of U. S. v. Bank of Ga.*, 10 Wheat. 333; *Thrall v. Newell*, 19 Vt. 202; *Terry v. Bissell*, 26 Conn. 23; *Worthington v. Cowles*, 112 Mass. 30; *Ross v. Terry*, 63 N. Y. 613; *Neff v. Horner*, 63 Penn. St. 327.

⁵ *Jones v. Ryde*, 8 Taunt. 488; *Gurney v. Womsley*, 4 E. & B. 133; *Baxter v. Duren*, 29 Me. 434; *Merriam v.*

Wolcott, 3 Allen, 258; *Wilder v. Cowles*, 100 Mass. 487; *Terry v. Bissell*, 26 Conn. 23; *Aldrich v. Jackson*, 5 R. I. 218; *Ledwich v. McKim*, 53 N. Y. 307; *Chambers v. Bank*, 78 Penn. St. 205.

⁶ *Eagle Bank v. Smith*, 5 Conn. 71; *Canal Bank v. Bank of Albany*, 1 Hill, N. Y. 287.

⁷ *Westropp v. Solomon*, 8 C. B. 345.

⁸ *Young v. Cole*, 3 Bing. N. C. 724; see *supra*, § 509–11.

⁹ *Young v. Adams*, 6 Mass. 182; *Markle v. Hatfield*, 2 Johns. 455; *Mudd v. Reeves*, 2 Har. & J. 368; and cases cited 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 930.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; *Gloucester Bank v. Salem Bank*, 17 Mass. 33; *Raymond v. Baer*, 13 S. & R. 318; *Rick v. Kelly*, 30 Penn. St. 527; *Rindall v. Bank*, 7 Leigh, 617; *Simms v. Clark*, 11 Ill. 137.

bond declines to guarantee its genuineness, though he at the time *bona fide* believes it to be genuine, he cannot, on its turning out to be a forgery, be compelled to refund, it appearing that at the time of the sale he put the purchaser on inquiry.¹—It has been held in Massachusetts that a purchaser of forged United States bonds which the government redeemed, may maintain against his vendor an action to recover back the money paid before he has repaid the government or returned the bonds to the vendor.²—Money paid for negotiable paper which is worthless on account of material alterations can also be recovered back;³ and so of money paid for a check which is worthless, provided the holder took prompt measures for the collection of the check, and gave, when necessary, due notice of its dishonor;⁴ and so of money obtained by discount on a forged bill, even though the defendant did not indorse the bill.⁵ It has been held, also, that the vendor of a treasury note, which has been paid but subsequently stolen and put in circulation, is liable to the purchaser, in an action of this class, though the indorsement was “without recourse.”⁶

§ 745. When the consideration has been in part received, but its complete reception is made impossible by *casus*, the price paid cannot be recovered back.⁷ Thus, where engines were to be constructed for a vessel at sea, to be fitted on her arrival at port, and

Money paid cannot be recovered back when contract is prevented

¹ Porter v. Bright, 82 Penn. St. 441.

² Brewster v. Burnett, 125 Mass. 68.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 106; citing Burchfield v. Moore, 3 E. & B. 683; and see Neff v. Horner, 63 Penn. St. 327; and *supra*, §§ 520, 699, *et seq.*

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 106, citing Turner v. Stones, 1 D. & L. 122; Rogers v. Langford, 1 C. & M. 637; Woodland v. Fear, 7 E. & B. 519; see comments by Blackburn, J., in Kennedy v. Mail Co., L. R. 2 Q. B. 580. In Rogers v. Walsh, 12 Neb. 28, where plaintiff was shown to have bought “county warrants” which turned out to be void, because issued without authority of law, he

was held entitled to recover back the price.

⁵ Eagle Bank v. Smith, 5 Conn. 71; Canal Bank v. Bank of Albany, 1 Hill, N. Y. 87. In Jones v. Ryde, 5 Taunt. 488, above cited, the vendor of a forged navy bill was held bound to return the money received for it. In Gompertz v. Bartlett, 2 E. & B. 849, it appeared that a bill of exchange, which had been sold as foreign, was worthless, being domestic and unstamped; the purchaser was held entitled to recover back the price.

⁶ Frazer v. D’Invilliers, 2 Barr, 200.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 314 *et seq.* 520; Benj. on Sales, 3d ed. §§ 336 *et seq.* 339 a.

by *casus*
from com-
pletion.

to be paid for by instalments as the work progressed, and after some progress in the work, and some payments made, the vessel was lost at sea, so that the fitting of the engines was impossible, it was held that the payments made could not be recovered back.¹ And with this is to be considered the "uniform though perhaps anomalous rule, that the money to be paid in advance of freight, must be paid though the goods are before payment lost by perils of the sea; and cannot be recovered back after, if paid before the goods are lost by perils of the sea."²

§ 746. We have already seen that by our law a bare sale of goods, supposing such a case to be put in evidence, is governed by the rule *caveat emptor*, and that in case the vendor turns out to have no title, the purchaser cannot fall back on the vendor for the return of the purchase money. We have also seen that a warranty of title may be implied from the mode of sale, as where a shopkeeper sells goods as his own over his counter.³ In such cases, if the vendor turns out to have no title, and the goods are taken from the purchaser, he may recover from the vendor the price paid by him as money had and received.⁴ The same rule applies when there is a breach of warranty, express or implied, going to the whole consideration.⁵ But it is a question of fact for the jury whether the thing delivered was not what was really intended by both parties; and if so, the sale will not be disturbed, and the parties will be held to their

¹ *Anglo-Egypt. Nav. Co. v. Rennie*, L. R. 10 C. P. 271. See reference *supra*, §§ 300, 326. But see *Schwartz v. Saunders*, 46 Ill. 18, and comments, *supra*, §§ 326 *et seq.*

² *Brett, J., Allison v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 1 Ap. Cas. 226, adopted in *Leake*, 2d ed. 112. See *supra*, § 520.

³ *Supra*, §§ 230 *et seq.*

⁴ *Supra*, § 520; *Leake*, 2d ed. 105; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 423, 629, 635-641, 893; *Eichholz v. Bannister*,

17 C. B. N. S. 708; *Chapman v. Speller*, 14 Q. B. 621; *Thurston v. Spratt*, 52 Me. 202; *Shattuck v. Green*, 104 Mass. 42.

⁵ *Supra*, § 520; *Giles v. Edwards*, 7 T. R. 181; *Howe Machine Co. v. Willie*, 85 Ill. 333; *Harvey v. Harris*, 112 Mass. 32; *Cutts v. Guild*, 57 N. Y. 229; and see cases cited *supra*, § 221. As to effect of warranty see *supra*, §§ 212 *et seq.*, and see also *infra*, §§ 909 *et seq.*

bargain.¹ Thus, where the defendant, a stock broker, bought for the plaintiff certain certificates of stock, which were afterwards repudiated by the company as issued without authority, though they had for some time been in the market, and their character known, it was held that the buyer was bound by his bargain and could not recover the price.²

§ 747. When the failure of consideration is imputable to the plaintiff's own conduct, he cannot recover the money paid.³ Thus, when through the plaintiff's neglect to register a conveyance the title is lost to him, he cannot recover back the price.⁴

When failure of consideration is imputable to plaintiff, he cannot recover.

§ 748. When a consideration is divisible, and the price can be apportioned, then if a distinct divisible portion of the consideration fails, the price paid for such portion may be recovered back.⁵ Thus, as between the parties, a bill of exchange may be apportioned into sums attributable respectively to several considerations, and may be met by the absence of failure of consideration *pro tanto*.⁶ And shrinkage of a thing purchased below its price may be set off in a suit for the purchase money when such shrinkage is imputable to the vendor.⁷ On the other hand, when though the consideration may be formally divisible, yet to divide it would be to destroy its utility, then a partial failure is to be regarded as a total failure;⁸ and

On partial failure of consideration price when entire cannot be recovered back.

¹ Mitchell v. Newhall, 15 M. & W. Co., 64 Ind. 125; and see *supra*, § 190; 308: *infra*, § 899. As to divisibility see

² Lamert v. Heath, 15 M. & W. 487. See *supra*, § 520; *infra*, § 749.

³ *Supra*, §§ 312, 325, 603, 716; Barrell *ex parte*, L. R. 10 Ch. 512; Thomas v. Brown, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 714.

⁴ Straton v. Rastall, 2 T. R. 366; Stray v. Russell, 1 E. & E. 888.

⁵ *Supra*, § 511 *et seq.*; Wood v. Benson, 2 C. & J. 94; Lucas v. Goodwin, 3 Bing. N. C. 746; Franklin v. Miller, 4 A. & E. 605; Johnson v. Johnson, 3 B. & P. 162; Devaux v. Conolly, 8 C. B. 640; Earl v. Page, 6 N. H. 477; Hill v. Rewee, 11 Met. 272; Young Man. Co. v. Wakefield, 121 Mass. 91; Dean v. Mason, 4 Conn. 428; Moss v. Printing

Co., 64 Ind. 125; and see *supra*, § 190; *infra*, § 899. As to divisibility see

§§ 338, 511, 580. ⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 630; Darnell v. Williams, 2 Stark. 145; Clark v. Lazarus, 2 M. & G. 167; *supra*, § 511.

⁷ *Infra*, §§ 899, 935; Harrington v. Stratton, 22 Pick. 510; Hammett v. Emerson, 27 Me. 308.

⁸ Johnson v. Johnson, 3 B. & P. 162; Adlard v. Booth, 7 C. & P. 108; Covas v. Bingham, 2 E. & B. 836; see Chanter v. Leese, 5 M. & W. 628. As to divisible duty, see *infra*, §§ 899 *et seq.*; as to payment on *quantum meruit*, see *infra*, §§ 716 *et seq.*; as to destruction by *casus*, see *supra*, § 300.

such, also, is the rule when the failure is in a material matter which was one of the chief inducements to the contract.¹ And as a rule, when the consideration goes to the whole price, and there is a partial failure of the consideration, there cannot be a *pro tanto* recovery of the price.² If the purchaser desires to recover back, the contract must be rescinded *in toto*.³ He cannot hold as to part and rescind as to part.⁴ In cases, on the other hand, in which the consideration is divisible, the purchaser may elect to take what can be delivered to him, and in such case, if the purchase money has been paid, he can recover back the excess, or, if there has been no payment, defend *pro tanto*.⁵ The same distinction is applicable to contracts for labor. If only part of the work has been done, only (supposing the defendant did not prevent completion) a proportional part of the price can be recovered.⁶

§ 749. A party who buys a speculative interest in property cannot, if the speculation disappoints him, recover back what he paid.⁷ This has been held to be the rule with regard to speculative purchases of rights which turned out not to be valid;⁸ or, which failed

¹ Roffey v. Shallcross, 4 Madd. 227; *infra*, §§ 898 *et seq.*; *supra*, § 190.

² *Supra*, § 520; Leake, 2d ed. 110; citing Hunt v. Silk, 5 East, 449; Blackburn v. Smith, 2 Ex. 783; Harnor v. Groves, 15 C. B. 667; Lyon v. Bertram, 20 How. U. S. 154; Bliss v. Negus, 8 Mass. 46; Nash v. Lull, 102 Mass. 60; Colville v. Besley, 2 Denio, 139. As to part performance, see *supra*, § 580; *infra*, § 899.

³ *Supra*, § 520; *infra*, §§ 899 *et seq.*; Benj. on Sales, § 426; Giles v. Edwards, 7 T. R. 181; Whincup v. Hughes, L. R. 6 C. P. 78; Harnor v. Groves, 15 C. B. 667; Gault v. Brown, 48 N. H. 183; Jenness v. Wendell, 51 N. H. 63; Clark v. Baker, 5 Met. 452; Miner v. Bradley, 22 Pick. 457; Morse v. Brackett, 98 Mass. 205; S. C., 104 Mass. 494; Mansfield v. Trigg, 113 Mass. 350; Bruce v. Pearson, 3 Johns. 534; Smith v. Lewis, 40 Ind. 98; see

Clark v. Gilbert, 26 N. Y. 279; Hargrave v. Conroy, 19 N. J. Eq. 281.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Mansfield v. Trigg, 113 Mass. 350; Taylor v. Hare, 1 B. & P. N. R. 260; Lawes v. Purser, 6 E. & P. 930. As to divisibility, see §§ 233, 330, 338, 511, 582, 899.

⁵ *Supra*, § 191; Boone v. Eyre, 1 H. Bl. 273; Davis v. Street, 1 C. & P. 18; Mavor v. Pyne, 3 Bing. 285; Oxendale v. Wetherell, 9 B. & C. 386; see *supra*, §§ 511, 712 *et seq.*; *infra*, §§ 898 *et seq.*

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 716-7; Mondel v. Steel, 8 M. & W. 858; Parish v. Stone, 14 Pick. 210. That partial failure of consideration is a defence *pro tanto*, see Black v. Ridgway, 131 Mass. 80.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 516 *et seq.*, 746.

⁸ See *supra*, §§ 519 *et seq.*; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 427; Taylor v. Hare, 1 B. & P. N. R. 260; Lamert v. Heath, 15 M. & W. 487.

to convey exclusive titles.¹ And when a title when bought is known to be tainted, and sells at a low figure, there can be no recovery when the title turns out to be bad.² And when a title as such is sold, the purchaser cannot, if nothing ultimately passes, recover the purchase money paid, but must fall back on the covenants of the deed, if there be such covenants.³

§ 750. Where there is no compulsion, and the party making the payment does not pay to relieve himself or his goods from custody extortionately imposed, a voluntary payment cannot be recovered back, even though it was made to avoid a suit, such suit not amounting to a criminal prosecution.⁴ “If a person with knowledge of all the facts determines to pay money claimed against him without litigation, he is as much bound as if the question had been decided in open court.”⁵ And this holds even though the result is the payment of a claim which could not have been enforced from defect of technical proof; as where the claim paid could not have been sustained from non-compliance with the statute of frauds.⁶

Compromise money paid voluntarily cannot be recovered back.

§ 751. A mistake, not going to legal liability, is no ground for recovering back money whose payment it induces. I may pay from mistaken notions of kindness, or from mistaken notions of policy, but, unless the mistake involves a belief in facts from which arises a legal duty on my part to pay the money, I

Money paid from motives of policy or kindness cannot be recovered

¹ See *supra*, § 520; *Begbie v. Phosphate Co.*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 679; *Slaughter v. Gerson*, 13 Wall. 379; *David v. Park*, 103 Mass. 501; *Phipps v. Buckman*, 30 Penn. St. 401; *Coil v. Pittsburg Coll.*, 40 Penn. St. 439.

² *Lamert v. Heath*, 15 M. & W. 486. As to negligent error, see *supra*, §§ 196, 572. That error in law does not avoid, see *supra*, § 198.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 110; *Clare v. Lamb*, L. R. 10 C. P. 334; *Hume v. Pocock*, L. R. 1 Ch. 379; *Manson v. Thacker*, L. R. 7 C. D. 620.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 150, 198, 533; *Bilbie v.*

Lumley, 2 East, 469; *Barber v. Pott*, 4 H. & N. 759; *Freeman v. Jefferies*, L. R. 4 Ex. 189; *Fay v. Oliver*, 20 Vt. 118; *Reed v. McGrew*, 5 Ohio, 375; *Troy v. Bland*, 58 Ala. 197.

⁵ *Mellish*, L. J., in *Rogers v. Ingham*, L. R. 3 C. D. 358, adopted *Leake*, 2d ed. 100; *supra*, § 523; and see *Hunt v. Silk*, 5 East, 449; *Frambers v. Risk*, 2 Ill. Ap. 499; *supra*, § 740.

⁶ *Thomas v. Brown*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 714; see *supra*, §§ 533-5, as to compromise of doubtful claims being a good consideration.

back ; nor
debts of
honor.

cannot recover the money back.¹ "The right to recover money paid under a mistake of fact must have reference to a belief of the existence of a fact, which, if true, would have given the person receiving a right against the person paying the money ; and it never can be applicable to a case where the fact mistaken is a fact which would merely have made it desirable for the person paying it to pay to the person receiving it."² The action, also, "does not lie for money paid by the plaintiff which was claimed of him as payable in point of honor and honesty, although it could not have been recovered from him by any course of law ; as in payment of a debt barred by the statute of limitations or contracted during his infancy, or to the extent of principal and legal interest upon an usurious contract, or for money fairly lost at play ; because in all these cases the defendant may retain it with a safe conscience, though by positive law he was barred from recovering. But it lies," so it is added in conformity with the views already expressed, "for money paid by mistake ; or upon a consideration which happens to fail ; or for money got through imposition, express or implied ; or extortion or oppression ; or an undue advantage taken of the plaintiff's situation, contrary to laws made for the protection of persons under those circumstances."³ Hence money paid voluntarily to discharge a debt barred by the statute of limitations is not the basis of a suit for contribution ;⁴ nor is money paid in discharge of an obligation not technically sustainable at law.⁵

¹ *Supra*, §§ 164, 496 ; *Aiken v. Short*, 1 H. & N. 210 ; *Wilson v. Thornbury*, L. R. 10 Ch. 239 ; see *Clare v. Lamb*, L. R. 10 C. P. 334 ; *Livermore v. Peru*, 55 Me. 469 ; *Real Est. Sav. Inst. v. Linder*, 74 Penn. St. 371.

² *Bramwell, B.*, *Aiken v. Short*, 1 H. & N. 210 ; see *supra*, §§ 164, 496.

³ Lord Mansfield, C. J., *Moses v. Macferlan*, 2 Burr. 1005. That a promise to pay debts of the character expressed in the text binds, see *supra*,

§ 513. That the money paid under a claim of right, though not the subject of suit, cannot be recovered back, see *Kennedy v. Hughey*, 3 Watts, 265 ; *Keener v. Bank*, 2 Barr, 237 ; *Natcher v. Natcher*, 47 Penn. St. 496.

⁴ *Wheatfield v. Brush Valley*, 25 Penn. St. 112 ; *supra*, § 513.

⁵ *Speise v. McCoy*, 6 W. & S. 485 ; see *Keener v. Bank*, 2 Barr, 237 ; *Natcher v. Natcher*, 47 Penn. St. 496.

IV. MONEY PAID IN MISTAKE.

§ 752. We have already seen that money paid under mistake of fact may be recovered back.¹ "Where money," said Lord Mansfield, "is paid under a mistake, which there was no ground to claim in conscience, the party may recover it back again."² This has been held to be the case with money paid under mistaken weight or measurement, or in miscalculation of price,³ and with money paid by a tenant of land to the wrong party claiming as landlord.⁴ Thus, the accommodation maker of a note which has been materially altered without his knowledge, and who paid in ignorance of the alteration, may recover back the money so paid.⁵ The purchaser, also, to take another illustration, of milk bought by the can, who pays more money than is due by reason of the cans being deficient in size, can recover back from the vendor his excess of payment.⁶ But the mistake should be established as a prerequisite to recovery,⁷ and, after any considerable lapse of time, should be established by clear and strong proof.⁸ And the obligation of a party ignorant of the mistake to repay money voluntarily paid him in mistake, arises only on notification of the mistake.⁹—Even when a mistake has been fraudulently induced, the right to

Money paid
in mistake
of fact may
be recovered
back.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 197, 521.

² *Bize v. Dickason*, 1 T. R. 285. See to same effect *Kelly v. Solari*, 9 M. & W. 58; *Norton v. Marden*, 15 Me. 45; *Pearson v. Lord*, 6 Mass. 81; *Bond v. Hayes*, 12 Mass. 36; *Talbot v. Nat. Bk.*, 129 Mass. 67; *Stanley Rule Co. v. Bailey*, 45 Conn. 464; *Burr v. Veeder*, 3 Wend. 412; *Sprague v. Birdsall*, 2 Cow. 419; *Mayor of N. Y. v. Erben*, 38 N. Y. 305; *Higgins v. Mendenhall*, 51 Iowa, 135; *Glenn v. Shannon*, 12 S. C. 570; *Wilson v. Sergeant*, 12 Ala. 778. See *Rice v. Barnard*, 127 Mass. 241.

³ *Supra*, §§ 190, 520 *et seq.*; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 415; *Cox v. Prentice*, 3 M. & S. 344; *Newall v. Tomlinson*, L. R. 6 C. P. 405; *Lyon v. Bertram*, 20 How. (U. S.) 149; *Holtz v.*

Schmidt, 59 N. Y. 253; *Wooster v. Sage*, 67 N. Y. 67. See *Garland v. Salem Bank*, 9 Mass. 408.

⁴ *Newsome v. Graham*, 10 B. & C. 234; *Barber v. Brown*, 1 C. B. N. S. 121.

⁵ *Fraker v. Little*, 24 Kans. 598. See as to alterations *supra*, § 695.

⁶ *Devine v. Edwards*, 87 Ill. 177.

⁷ *Union Savings Ass. v. Kehlors*, 7 Mo. Ap. 158.

⁸ *Thompson v. Fullinwider*, 5 Ill. Ap. 551; *supra*, § 289.

⁹ *Southwick v. Bank*, 84 N. Y. 420; citing *Freeman v. Jefferies*, L. R. 4 Exch. 189; *Stacy v. Graham*, 14 N. Y. 492; *Snyder v. Williams*, 37 N. Y. 109; *supra*, §§ 284 *et seq.*

recover back is lost where the party paying the money, after a discovery of all the facts, acquiesces in the disbursement of the money in pursuance of the contract by the other contracting party.¹ But mere lapse of time does not preclude recovery; and where there has been no laches imputable to the plaintiff, the fact that the defendant is prejudiced by the mistake is no defence.²—The mistake must have been as to an existing fact.³

§ 753. That the mistake of fact was negligently made does not necessarily preclude the party from recovering.⁴ Mere negligence does not preclude party from recovering. A party who omits to avail himself of the means of correcting his mistake, although these means were at hand, is not thereby prevented from setting up this mistake in a suit to recover back money paid under its influence.⁵ Even though notice had been previously given him of the true state of facts, yet if he had forgotten these facts he may nevertheless recover; as where it was held that a life insurance company could recover back money paid by them on a lapsed policy, though their books showed they had notice of the lapse.⁶—That where a contract has been negligently induced a different conclusion may be reached, and the party negligently inducing another to contract with him may be estopped, we have already seen.⁷ And, when the payment is imputable to the plaintiff's recklessness, the plaintiff has no case.⁸

¹ *People v. Stephens*, 71 N. Y. 527; *Richardson*, 51 Tex. 1. As to liability see *supra*, § 289. for negligence, see *infra*, § 1043.

² *Durrant v. Comm.*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 234. See Mr. Moak's note, 29 Eng. R. 590, citing *Young v. Lehman*, 63 Ala. 519; *Alston v. Richardson*, 51 Tex. 1. ³ *Ferson v. Sanger*, 1 Wood. & M. 138; *Wheadon v. Olds*, 20 Wend. 174; *Fraker v. Little*, 24 Kan. 598; *Lamb v. Harris*, 8 Ga. 546. See *supra*, §§ 196, 245, 289, 572.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 197, 521; *Southwick v. Bank*, 84 N. Y. 433.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 196, 245, 289, 572; *Leake*, 2d ed. 102; *Bell v. Gardiner*, 4 M. & G. 11; *Townsend v. Crowdry*, 8 C. B. N. S. 477; *Stanley Rule Co. v. Bailey*, 45 Conn. 464; *Waite v. Leggett*, 8 Cow. 195; *Boyer v. Park*, 2 Denio, 107; *Devine v. Edwards*, 87 Ill. 177; *Rutherford v. McIvor*, 21 Ala. 750; *Alston v.*

⁶ *Kelly v. Solari*, 9 M. & W. 54; *Townsend v. Crowdy*, 8 C. B. N. S. 477; *Mayer v. New York*, 63 N. Y. 455. See *supra*, §§ 196, 245, 289, 572.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 196, 202 a, 226; *Norton v. Marden*, 15 Me. 45. See *Kingston Bank v. Eltinge*, 40 N. Y. 391; *Rutherford v. McIvor*, 21 Ala. 750.

⁸ *Wood v. Boylston Bank*, 129 Mass. 358; *supra*, §§ 196, 245, 289, 572.

§ 754. Money paid voluntarily cannot be recovered back when the mistake is purely one of law. It is on this ground that the court placed an early ruling that though an insurance was actually void in law in consequence of a material misrepresentation by the insured, yet money paid by the insurer to the insured on the loss could not be recovered back since the mistake which led to the payment was exclusively one of law.¹ Yet when the question is of the application of law to a complex state of facts, there is no more reason why relief should not be given to a party paying money by mistake, than there is why relief should not be given to a party making a contract by mistake;² supposing there is nothing to equitably estop the plaintiff from recovery after such a payment by mistake.³ But where the mistake is purely one of law, the party paying cannot recover back. Thus it has been held in Massachusetts that although under the statute there in force no greater rate of interest than six per cent. can be received in any action unless on an agreement in writing, yet a party who has paid interest on an oral agreement in excess of six per cent. cannot recover back the money so paid.⁴

Money paid
in mistake
of law can-
not be re-
covered
back.

§ 755. It is no defence in a suit by a third party against an agent to whom money has been paid by mistake, that the money has been paid over to the principal, ^{When} money

¹ *Bilbie v. Lumley*, 2 East, 469; *Leake*, 2d ed. 104, citing also *Lowry v. Bourdieu*, 2 Doug. 468; *Brisbane v. Dacres*, 5 Taunt. 143; *Lamborn v. County Com.*, 97 U. S. 181; *Norton v. Marden*, 15 Me. 45; *Fellows v. District*, 39 Me. 559; *Benson v. Munroe*, 7 Cush. 125; *Wilde v. Baker*, 14 Allen, 349; *Northrop v. Graves*, 19 Conn. 548; *Clarke v. Dutcher*, 9 Cow. 674; *Real Est. Inst. v. Linder*, 74 Penn. St. 371; and cases cited *supra*, §§ 198-9.

² See *supra*, § 199; *Hall v. Jackson Co.*, 5 Ill. App. 609.

³ *James ex parte*, L. R. 9 Ch. 609. As to estoppel, see *supra*, §§ 196, 202 a.

⁴ "There are some cases in which this

court has not adhered strictly to the rule that a mistake in law is incapable of being remedied; but relief has never been given in the case of a simple money demand by one person against another, there being between those persons no fiduciary relation, and *no equity to supervene by reason of the conduct of either.*" *James, L. J., Rogers v. Ingham*, L. R. 3 C. D. 351. The last is a very broad exception, at least as broad as the rule already stated, that mistake in the subsumption of facts under a legal principle is a mistake of fact and not of law; *supra*, § 199.

⁴ *Marvin v. Mandell*, 125 Mass. 562.

paid by
third per-
son to
agent can
be recov-
ered back.

supposing that the agent at the time of so paying over had notice of the third party's claim.¹ It is otherwise, however, when before notice the money has been paid over by the agent to his principal, or allowed for in the agent's accounts with the principal.²

¹ *Elliott v. Swartwood*, 10 Pet. 137 ;
Garland v. Bank, 9 Mass. 408 ; *Frye v.*
Lockwood, 4 Cow. 454 ; *Mowatt v. Mo-*
Clellan, 1 Wend. 173 ; *Wharton v.*
Hudson, 3 Rawle, 390, and other cases
cited 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 911.

² Wh. on Ag. § 576 ; *Holland v. Rus-*
sell, 1 B. & S. 424 ; *Cox v. Prentice*, 3
M. & S. 344 ; *Peto v. Blades*, 5 Taunt.
657 ; *Carew v. Otis*, 1 Johns. 418 ; *La*
Farge v. Kneeland, 7 Cow. 456 ; *Gran-*
ger v. Hathaway, 17 Mich. 500.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MONEY PAID TO ANOTHER'S USE.

Voluntary payment to another's use cannot be recovered back, but otherwise as to payment at request, § 756.	Party paying maritime liens may claim contribution, § 764.
Request may be inferred from circumstances, § 757.	Co-debtors and co-sureties paying common debt entitled to contribution, § 765.
Money must have been actually paid, § 758.	Contribution limited by contract between parties, § 766.
When A. is required by law to make payment for B. he may recover from B., § 759.	Same principle extended to members of associations, § 767.
So of party whose goods are attached to pay another's debt, § 760.	Surety entitled to contribution from principal, § 768.
Not necessary that execution should issue, § 761.	And to share securities with co-surety, § 769.
Person whose goods are distrained on another's premises may recover from such other, § 762.	Insurer may recover from person causing loss, § 770.
No recovery when the party paying acted negligently or officiously, § 763.	Money contributed to illegal enterprise cannot be recovered back, nor can tort-feasor recover contribution, § 771.

§ 756. A PARTY in whose behalf a voluntary payment is made by another is not bound in law to reimburse the party making the payment. Whether I will make a particular investment; whether I will subscribe to a particular charity; whether I will relieve particular goods belonging to me from a burden to which they are exposed; whether I will reinsure my property, whose insurance has expired: these, and similar questions are for me to decide. I may have my own reasons for not making a payment which would apparently be advantageous to me;¹ at all events, if parties are entitled to recover money they lay out for the apparent relief of others, or for the apparent credit of others, the lines which

Voluntary payment for another cannot be recovered back, but otherwise as to payment at request.

¹ See *infra*, § 784; *supra*, § 506.

protect business from the incursions of strangers would be broken down. When such money is paid by the request of the party relieved or credited, or when it is paid under compulsion, then, as we will see, it can be recovered back; but it cannot be recovered back when made voluntarily without request.¹ Hence, where a drawer of a bill of exchange made for the accommodation of the acceptor, after being discharged from liability by the holder neglecting to notify him of dishonor, paid the bill in part, it was held that he could not recover what he paid from the acceptor, though the latter was *pro tanto* relieved, the reason being that the payment was voluntary;² and so, it seems, of a payment made by a surety for a principal on a contract which could not have been enforced as not valid under the statute of frauds.³ For the same reason payments made by a physician on account of a pauper patient cannot be recovered from the parish authorities unless they authorize the expense.⁴ A volunteer, also, who pays out money for the support of a lunatic, without any contract, express or implied, cannot recover the money from the lunatic's committee.⁵ It is otherwise as to money paid by the plaintiff at the defendant's request, either express or implied. In such cases the defendant is bound to refund.⁶ Hence where A. at

¹ *Infra*, § 763; 1 Wms. Saund. 264, n. (1); Leake, 2d ed. 85; Stokes v. Lewis, 1 T. R. 20; Child v. Morley, 8 T. R. 610; Durnford v. Messiter, 5 M. & S. 446; Johnson v. Steam Packet Co., L. R. 3 C. P. 43; Bates v. Townley, 2 Ex. 152; England v. Marsden, L. R. 1 C. P. 529; see Dearborn v. Bowman, 3 Met. Mass. 155; Richardson v. Williams, 49 Me. 558; Day v. Holmes, 103 Mass. 306; Bigelow v. Davis, 16 Barb. 561; Springer v. Springer, 43 Penn. St. 518; Davis v. Calloway, 30 Ind. 112.

² Sleigh v. Sleigh, 5 Ex. 514.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 85; citing Pawle v. Gunn, 4 Bing. N. C. 445; Indian. R. R. v. O'Reilly, 38 Ind. 140.

⁴ Wing v. Mill, 1 B. & Ald. 104; see Lamb v. Bunce, 4 M. & S. 275.

⁵ Hehn v. Hehn, 23 Penn. St. 415.

⁶ 1 Saund. 264, note 1; Power v. Butcher, 10 B. & C. 346; Grissell v. Robinson, 3 Bing. N. C. 15; Driver v. Burton, 17 Q. B. 989; Benson v. Thompson, 27 Me. 471; Willis v. Hobson, 37 Me. 403; Rumney v. Ellsworth, 4 N. H. 138; Wilson v. George, 10 N. H. 445; Beach v. Vandenburg, 10 Johns. 361; Rensselaer Factory v. Reid, 5 Cow. 603; Little v. Gibbs, 1 South. 213; Hatton v. Robinson, 4 Blackf. 479; Taylor v. Colten, 6 Ired. 69; Wharton v. Franks, 9 Porter, 232. That the request must be averred, see Stokes v. Lewis, 1 T. R. 20; Exall v. Partridge, 8 T. R. 308; Brittain v. Lloyd, 14 M. & W. 762; Packard v. Lienow, 12 Mass. 11; Hassinger v. Solmes, 5 S. & R. 4.

B.'s request becomes responsible for a debt of B. to C., and is compelled to pay such debt, A. may sue B. for the money so paid.¹—The Roman law, which subjects a party to liability for payment made in his absence in relief of his estate, which would otherwise be sacrificed, prevails throughout continental Europe;² and it is accepted in Louisiana, though with some qualification.³ Our own law is unquestionably inconsistent in rejecting the Roman doctrine on the ground that no man should have a creditor forced on him without his consent, and yet permitting a stranger to purchase claims against any one against whom there may be claims in the market. The merchantability of debts, however, has now become essential to business, and to this the old doctrine of the common law has to yield. It has yielded, however, only so far as the exigencies of commerce require; and it should yield no further. Under the old Roman system, where, from the insulation of business men, ruin would often follow unless aid by a *negotiorum gestor* could be secured, it was natural that it should be held that the *negotiorum gestor* should be entitled to be reimbursed. But in our times, each day adds to the facilities by which the owner of property can be advised of disaster to it and communicate his instructions; while each day the increasing complications of business add to the embarrassments which would be produced were volunteers to be permitted to step in and arrange whatever they might consider out of place. And though, undoubtedly, we have been obliged to relax the old rule so far as to permit the assignment of debts, yet, with this limitation, the increasing complexity of our civilization adds to the arguments against permitting parties to place themselves in the position of creditors to others as to debts such others do not choose to incur. If I incur a debt to A., I now do it, it is true, with the understanding that A. may assign this debt to B.—But the fact that I incur a debt of a particular character to A. is no reason why C., without my knowl-

¹ *Hassinger v. Solmes*, 5 S. & R. 4; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 62; *Wh. Taylor v. Gould*, 57 Penn. St. 152. on Ag. § 356.

² See *Windscheid*, tit. Neg. Gest.; ³ *White v. Jones*, 14 La. An. 681; *Erwin's Succession*, 16 La. An. 132.

edge, should subject me to a debt which I have never authorized at all.

§ 757. While, however, the principle is settled that the mere payment of money by A. on behalf of B., unless requested by B., does not give A. a claim against B., yet it is not necessary, in order to prove a request, that an express application from B. to A. should be shown. We may infer a request from the prior business relations of the parties; from the fact that B. was aware at the time of the payment and encouraged it; from the fact that the payment was in pursuance of a plan previously approved by him; from his acceptance of its fruits; in fine, from any circumstances from which we may hold it probable that A. paid the money at B.'s instigation, or, at all events, with B.'s approval.¹ The most familiar illustration of the principle before us is to be found in the payments by general agents advancing money in the ordinary course of business for their principals, which advances, when within the range of the agent's duties, the principal is bound to refund.² The same rule applies to payments made by one party to an adventure for its promotion, which payments were in furtherance of the common plan, and which he is entitled to recover from his co-adventurers.³ Where, also, certain lands were bought in at an auction sale, and the duties imposed by government were paid by the auctioneer, he was held entitled to use this form of action to recover the money back from the party whose property was relieved.⁴ A trustee, also, under a will, who pays a legacy duty upon an annuity, may recover, in the same way, the money paid from the legatee.⁵ So, also, where the London custom in negotiating and perfecting a lease, was that while the lessor's solicitor should draw the papers, the expense

¹ *Sutten v. Tatham*, 10 Ad. & El. 27; *Pollock v. Stables*, 12 Q. B. 765; *Pawle Foster v. Ley*, 2 Bing. N. C. 269; *v. Gunn*, 6 Scott, 286; 4 Bing. N. C. 445; *Prior v. Hembrow*, 8 M. & W. 873; *Brown v. Hodgson*, 4 Taunt. 189; *Knox v. Martin*, 8 N. H. 154; *Seymour v. Marlboro*, 40 Vt. 171; *Moreland v. Davidson*, 71 Penn. St. 371; *James v. O'Driscoll*, 2 Bay, 101.

² *Bailey v. Haines*, 13 Q. B. 815.

⁴ *Brittain v. Lloyd*, 14 M. & W. 762.

⁵ *Hales v. Freeman*, 1 B. & B. 391.

³ *Westropp v. Solomon*, 8 C. B. 345;

was to be paid by the lessee, it was held that such expenses, having been prepaid by the lessor, could be recovered back in this form of action from the lessee.¹ The furthest limit that has been reached in this direction is in respect to services rendered in the interment of the dead. It has been held that a party who voluntarily incurs expenses in burying another, can recover the expenses of the funeral from that other person's estate;² and that a husband, absent at the time of his wife's death, is liable to a party who supplied the funds for her burial in a way suitable to the husband's condition.³ In these cases a general agency to friends may be inferred.

§ 758. It is necessary, to sustain the suit, that money or its equivalent should have been paid by the plaintiffs to the defendant's use.⁴ Hence, it has been argued that the mere fact that the plaintiff's goods had been seized under a distress by the defendant's landlord on account of rent due by the defendant, does not by itself sustain a suit for money paid,⁵ though it would be otherwise if the goods of the plaintiff had been sold under an execution for a debt due by the defendant, and the proceeds actually applied to the payment of such debt.⁶ Merely giving a bond by the plaintiff, as surety, for the defendant's debt, is not paying money;⁷ though it has been ruled that giving negotiable paper is such payment.⁸ And when goods are paid as an equivalent to cash, they are to be so treated in this connection.⁹ It has been held in several cases that execution on a surety's property, on judg-

Money
must have
been paid.

¹ *Grissell v. Robinson*, 3 Scott, 329; also *New Salem v. Wendell*, 2 Pick. 341; *Forsyth v. Gamson*, 5 Wend. 558; *Sears v. Giddey*, 41 Mich. 90.

plaintiffs were liable to their own attorney in the first instance, and all the evidence shows that according to the custom the defendant is ultimately to pay for the lease, he must be taken to have impliedly assented to the payment made by the plaintiff, and the action lies for money paid to his use."

² *Rogers v. Price*, 3 Y. & Jer. 28.

³ *Ambrose v. Kerrison*, 10 C. B. 776; *Bradshaw v. Beard*, 12 C. B. N. S. 344; 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 889, citing

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 756 *et seq.*

⁵ See *Brittain v. Lloyd*, 14 M. & W. 773; *supra*, §§ 756-7; *infra*, §§ 759, 762.

⁶ *Rodgers v. Maw*, 15 M. & W. 444.

⁷ *Taylor v. Higgins*, 3 East, 169; *Power v. Butcher*, 10 B. & C. 329; *Morrison v. Berkey*, 7 S. & R. 238; *Pursel v. Ellis*, 5 W. & S. 525.

⁸ *Pearson v. Parker*, 3 N. H. 366; *Chandler v. Brainard*, 14 Pick. 285; *Doolittle v. Dwight*, 2 Met. 561.

⁹ *Garnsey v. Allen*, 27 Me. 366.

ments obtained against him for the principal's debt, enables him, on money being paid, to sustain an action for money paid against the principal.¹ If the money is paid, as will appear hereafter more fully, it is not necessary that an execution should have issued compelling the payment, if the case were one in which an attachment could at any time have issued.²

§ 759. We have already noticed cases in which, from acceptance of service, or from acceptance of goods, supplied at the request, express or implied, of the party accepting, a contract to pay for such services or goods is assumed. We have now to recur to cases in which one party is assumed to have contracted to repay money paid for him by another, not because he requested such payment, but because the party paying was in the eye of the law authorized to act for the party for whom the payment was made.³ Thus the guardians of a union workhouse have been held entitled to recover the expenses of removing nuisances from the vestry whose duty it was to remove the nuisances;⁴ an indorser, who, when sued by a holder of a bill, pays the holder, is entitled to recover from the acceptor;⁵ a surety who pays his principal's debt is entitled to recover from his principal, and one co-surety is entitled to recover from the other;⁶ a carrier who has by mistake delivered goods to a wrong person, and who has been compelled to pay the value of the goods to the owner, is entitled to recover these goods from the person who thus wrongfully appropriated them;⁷ an auctioneer, as in a case already noticed, who pays auction duty, is entitled to recover the amount from the parties in whose relief it was paid.⁸—Where, also, a mortgagee

¹ *Lord v. Staples*, 23 N. H. 448; *Randall v. Rich*, 11 Mass. 494; *Bonney v. Seely*, 2 Wend. 481; *Morrison v. Berkeley*, 7 S. & R. 238; and cases 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 880. *Infra*, § 761.

² *Infra*, § 761.

³ *Child v. Morley*, 8 T. R. 610; *Jenkins v. Tucker*, 1 H. Bl. 90; *Kenan v. Holloway*, 16 Ala. 53.

⁴ *Halborn Union v. St. Leonard's*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 145.

⁵ *Pownal v. Ferrand*, 6 B. & C. 439;

Jefferys v. Gurr, 2 B. & Ad. 833; for other cases of liability on negotiable paper see *Bate v. Payne*, 13 Q. B. 900; *Hawley v. Beverly*, 6 M. & G. 221; *Mallalieu v. Hodgson*, 16 Q. B. 689; *Bleeden v. Charles*, 7 Bing. 246; *Horback v. Reeside*, 6 Whart. 47.

⁶ *Pitt v. Purssord*, 8 M. & W. 538.

⁷ *Brown v. Hodgson*, 4 Taunt. 189.

⁸ *Brittain v. Lloyd*, 14 M. & W. 762.

"The law is, that a party by voluntarily paying the debt of another does

bought at sheriff's sale the mortgaged property, and then, to protect the property from further execution, paid the taxes which had accrued on it while the mortgagor was in possession, it was held that he was entitled to recover the amount thus paid from the party who should primarily have paid it.¹ "It is a clearly established principle," said Trunkey, J., "that no assumpsit will be raised by the mere voluntary payment of the debt of another person; from such act a request and promise are not implied. Another principle is, that when the plaintiff is compelled to pay the defendant's debt, in consequence of his omission to do so, the law infers that he requested the plaintiff to make the payment for him. There was a strict liability on the part of the defendant to pay the taxes. And it was his duty. Prompt payment of taxes is to the public advantage. Attempts by him who owes and ought to pay them to evade payment, or shift the burden upon another, ought not to be encouraged; the defendant has shown nothing which in good conscience should relieve him. He wittingly became owner and held possession of the lots subject to the mortgages, and had as little right to create or suffer an incumbrance which would take preference of the mortgage, as the mortgagor would have had had he remained owner and in possession. The mortgagee was compelled to pay the taxes in relief of the land purchased for his debt, the land not raising a sufficient fund to pay both liens. We are of opinion that this is a clear case for the application of the principle that he who is compelled to pay another's debt, because of his omission to do so, may recover on the ground that the law infers that the debtor requested such payment." And it has been held that one of two tenants in common who pays the mortgage for both, acquires a lien on his co-tenant's share of the mortgaged property which he holds in security for the

not acquire any right of action against that other; but if I pay your debt because I am forced to do so, then I may recover the same; for the law raises a promise on the part of the person whose debt I pay to reimburse me. That principle was fully established in

the case of *Exall v. Partridge*, 8 T. R. 308." Bayley, J., *Pownal v. Ferrand*, 6 B. & C. 439; see *Davis v. Humphreys*, 6 M. & W. 153.

¹ *Hogg v. Longstreth*, 97 Penn. St. 255.

amount paid in excess of his share of the mortgage debt.¹ And, as a general rule, where a vendor of real estate is compelled on a personal suit to pay a mortgage which the vendee agreed to discharge, the vendor may sue the vendee for reimbursement.² But when a vendee undertakes to pay the amount of an incumbrance, and expressly covenants to pay the same, which he is compelled to do, he cannot recover from a remote purchaser, though the incumbrance is recited in the deed under which the latter takes.³

§ 760. A party whose goods are attached in another's hands, or which, when in such other person's hands, are subjected to a lien for a debt of such other person, and who pays the debt of such other person in order to release the goods, is entitled on the same reason to recover the money so paid from the person to ease whom it was paid.⁴

§ 761. It is not necessary that the payment should be actually made under an attachment; it is enough if it is a payment which an attachment would compel.⁵ A debt enforceable only in equity stands in this respect on the same footing as a debt enforceable in law. "If the plaintiff had paid the money either under the fear of process of a court of equity or of a court of law, he could have recovered it from the defendant."⁶ And as a general rule, where a party is in a position in which he is open to compulsion by law to pay a particular sum, it is not necessary for him to wait for an execution, or an attachment, to enable him to sue in this form of action.⁷ Even where an adminis-

¹ Sargent v. McFarland, 8 Pick. 500; see Roche v. Savings Bank, 128 Mass. 10.

² Kearney v. Tanner, 17 S. & R. 94; Trevor v. Perkins, 5 Whart. 244.

³ Keim v. Robeson, 23 Penn. St. 456.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 82, citing Johnson v. Packet Co., L. R. 3 C. P. 45; Sapsford v. Fletcher, 4 T. R. 511; Ticonic Bk. v. Smiley, 27 Me. 225; and see Sargent v. Carrier, 49 N. H. 310; Hale v. Huse, 10 Gray, 99; Butler v. Wright, 6 Wend. 284.

⁵ Pitt v. Purssord, 8 M. & W. 538; Spencer v. Parry, 3 Ad. & El. 338; Brown v. Hodgson, 4 Taunt. 189; Shaw v. Loud, 12 Mass. 447; Firth v. Sprague, 14 Mass. 455; Randolph v. Randolph, 3 Rand. Va. 490. That execution may be treated as tantamount to payment, see *supra*, § 758.

⁶ Hutton v. Eyre, 6 Taunt. 289.

⁷ Pitt v. Purssord, 8 M. & W. 538; Sleight v. Sleight, 5 Exch. 514; Goodall v. Wentworth, 20 Me. 322; Mauri v. Hefferman, 13 Johns. 58.

trator of a surety paid a debt which was barred under the statute of limitation giving special protection to administrators, but which was not barred, so far as concerned the relations of the principal to the creditor, it was held that the administrator could recover the amount paid from the principal.¹ But payment must not have been merely voluntarily made.² And a surety who voluntarily pays a debt from which he is discharged by law, cannot maintain a suit against the principal for reimbursement.³

§ 762. A party to whom no negligence is imputable,⁴ whose goods have been seized under a distress against another person in whose premises they may happen to have been, may by stress of the rule before us, recover from the latter person the value of the goods; or, if he pays the rent in order to release the goods, may recover the amount so paid.⁵ And an under lessee or lodger who is obliged, by compulsion of distress on his goods, to pay rent to the superior landlord, is entitled to deduct the amount so paid when sued by his immediate landlord. "When the tenant is compelled in order to protect himself to make payments which ought, as between himself and his landlord, to have been made by the latter, *he is considered as having been authorized by the landlord so to apply his rent due or accruing due.* All such payments, if incapable of being treated as actual payments of rent, would certainly give the tenant a right of action against his landlord as for money paid to his use; and so would, in an action of debt for the rent, form a legitimate subject of set-off."⁶ The same principle enables a tenant to recover from his landlord sums paid under compulsion for drainage;⁷ and for road repairs.⁸ But technically, as we have seen, there can be no recovery for money paid without proof of the payment of money or

Persons whose goods are distrained on another's premises may recover from such other.

¹ Shaw v. Loud, 12 Mass. 447.

529; see Sapsford v. Fletcher, 4 T. R.

² *Supra*, §§ 758 et seq.; West Chester v. Apple, 35 Penn. St. 284.

511.

³ Kennedy v. Carpenter, 2 Whart. 344.

⁶ Per cur. Graham v. Allsopp, 3 Ex. 198; Jones v. Morris, 3 Ex. 742; Johnson v. Skafte, L. R. 4 Q. B. 705; cited in Leake, 2d ed. 83.

⁴ See *infra*, § 763.

⁵ Exall v. Partridge, 8 T. R. 308; England v. Marsden, L. R. 1 C. P.

⁷ Dawson v. Liston, 5 B. & Ald. 521.

⁸ Baker v. Greenhill, 3 Q. B. 148.

its equivalent.¹ And a plaintiff who negligently left his goods on the defendant's premises, without any engagement with the defendant, cannot recover money paid by him to relieve such goods from a distress for rent due by the defendant.² Where, also, the plaintiff and the defendant being under-lessees at distinct rents of separate parts of the premises, the plaintiff, under threat of distress, paid the whole rent, it was held that he could not recover a proportion of the payment from the defendant.³

§ 763. Where one party pays money for another through his own negligence, he cannot recover from the party on whose behalf it is paid.⁴ Hence, as we have just seen, a party who negligently leaves his goods in another's house, where they are distrained, cannot recover from the owner of the house the amount paid to release the goods.⁵ The law under such circumstances will not imply the request.⁶ And where W. negligently delivers to A. goods meant for B., W., having paid the value of the goods to B., cannot recover the amount of the payment from A. without proving conversion by A.⁷ Where, also, the plaintiff, one of two joint prize agents, was, in part through his own want of caution, imposed upon by a person who falsely pretended to be a seaman entitled to prize-money, and was afterwards compelled to pay the amount to the real claimant, it was held that the plaintiff could not recover a moiety of the payment from his associate agent.⁸ A banker, also, cannot recover from a party whose cheque has

¹ *Supra*, § 758.

² *England v. Marsden*, L. R. 1 C. P. 529.

³ *Bates v. Founley*, 2 Exch. 152.

⁴ *Supra*, § 756; *Griffinhoofe v. Danbuz*, 5 E. & B. 746; *England v. Marsden*, L. R. 1 C. P. 529; *Sleigh v. Sleigh*, 3 Exch. 514; see also *Hunter v. Hunt*, 1 C. B. 300; *Willis v. Hobson*, 37 Me. 403; *Rumney v. Ellsworth*, 4 N. H. 138; *Fisher v. Kinaston*, 18 Vt. 489; *Gleason v. Dyke*, 22 Pick.

393; *Doty v. Wilson*, 14 Johns. 378; *Rensselaer Glass Fact. v. Reid*, 5 Cow. 603; *Taylor v. Baldwin*, 10 Barb. 626; *Mayor, etc., v. Hughes*, 1 Gill & J. 497; *Taylor v. Cotten*, 6 Ired. 69; *Lewis v. Lewis*, 3 Strobb. 530.

⁵ *Supra*, § 762.

⁶ *Wing v. Mill*, 1 B. & Ald. 104.

⁷ *Sills v. Laing*, 4 Camp. 81.

⁸ *McIlreath v. Margetson*, 4 Dougl. 278; cited as *MacKreath v. Margetson*, 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 887.

been fraudulently altered the amount paid out by the banker on such cheque.¹

§ 764. The owner of a ship who is compelled to pay the crew's maritime lien for wages may recover the amount so paid from the person under whose employment of ship and crew the debt was incurred.² And where the master of a ship has bound the ship and cargo for necessary repairs by bottomry bonds, the owner of goods, who has been compelled in part to pay such bonds in order to release his goods, may recover the amount so paid from the ship owner.³ But when a ship is owned in equal shares by two persons, A. and B., and A., without B.'s knowledge, repairs the vessel in a home port, the money advanced for this purpose cannot be recovered by A. from B.⁴

Party paying maritime lien for another may claim reimbursement.

§ 765. As has already been incidentally noticed, when several parties are co-debtors of a common debt, and one of them is compelled to pay the whole debt, he may recover contribution from the others; and since in this case we cannot resort to the hypothesis of implied promise so far as concerns the claim of a debtor upon a co-debtor with whom he was in no privity, we must fall back on the rule now immediately before us, holding that because the debtor who pays does so as his co-debtor's representative, he is entitled to recover contribution from his co-debtor. The same reason explains the rulings that a surety who pays more than his share is entitled to recover contribution from his co-surety.⁵ Hence, where one of two joint

Co-debtors and co-sureties paying claim entitled to contribution.

¹ Hall v. Fuller, 5 B. & C. 750; see L. C. 4th Am. ed. 120; Edger v. Knapp, 5 M. & G. 758; Kemp v. Finden, 12 M.

² Leake, 2d ed. 88; Johnson v. & W. 423; Ellis v. Emmanuel, L. R. 1 Steam Packet Co., L. R. 3 C. P. 38. Ex. D. 157; Steel v. Dixon, L. R. 17

³ Duncan v. Benson, 3 Ex. 644; see Ch. D. 825; Powers v. Nash, 37 Me. Lloyd v. Guibert, L. R. 1 Q. B. 115. 322; Boardman v. Paige, 11 N. H. 431;

⁴ Benson v. Thompson, 27 Me. 471. Miller v. Sawyer, 30 Vt. 417; Chaffee

⁵ *Infra*, § 835; Leake, 2d ed. 80; v. Jones, 19 Pick. 264; Campbell v. Theobald, Prin. and Sur. ch. 11; 1 Mesier, 4 John. Ch. 334; Parker v. Story, Eq. Jur. 12th ed. § 499; Har- Ellis, 2 Sandf. 223; Coburn v. Whee- bert's case, 3 Coke, 11b; Dering v. lock, 34 N. Y. 440; Bobbitt v. Shryer, Winchilsea, 1 Cox, 31; 1 Wh. & Tu. 70 Ind. 513; Hall v. Robinson, 8 Ired.

accommodation payees and indorsers pays the whole of the note, he may recover contribution from the other.¹ To establish the relationship of co-debtors or co-sureties, no concert or unity as to time or amount is necessary; nor need the fact of the joint obligation be reciprocally known.² But there must be co-liability; and hence, a debtor whose liability is extinguished by the statute of limitation, cannot be compelled to contribute.³—A second indorser on a promissory note is not liable to the first, though both are accommodation indorsers, unless it be proved that they have agreed to be liable as co-sureties.⁴ Nor is a surety liable to contribute to reimburse a party who, though technically a fellow-surety, is really the principal debtor.⁵ Nor can a special supplementary guarantor be made to contribute to reimburse a co-surety in a matter to which the obligation of the guarantor does not reach;⁶ nor is an accommodation guarantor bound to contribute to reimburse a co-guarantor for whose accommodation alone he signed the contract of guaranty.⁷ Whether there is this joint liability is often a matter of extrinsic proof, the understanding of the parties being in this way established;⁸ though evidence will not be received to establish an obligation in conflict with the terms of a written contract.⁹—An inde-

56. See *Batchelder v. Fiske*, 17 Mass. 464; *Himes v. Keller*, 3 W. & S. 401; see also *Brandt on Suretyship*, §§ 220 *et seq.*

¹ *Steckel v. Steckel*, 28 Penn. St. 235.

² *Dering v. Winchilsea*, 1 Cox, 318; *Whiting v. Burke*, L. R. 10 Eq. 539; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 260. See *Sibley v. McAllaster*, 8 N. H. 389; *Norton v. Coons*, 3 Denio, 130; *Ponder v. Carter*, 12 Ired. L. 242; *McKenna v. George*, 2 Rich. Eq. 15; *Van Petten v. Richardson*, 68 Mo. 379.

³ *Craythorne v. Swinborne*, 14 Ves. 160; *Peaslee v. Breed*, 10 N. H. 489; *Boardman v. Paige*, 11 N. H. 431.

⁴ *Pars.* II. 36; *McDonald v. Magruder*, 3 Pet. 470; *Decreet v. Burt*, 7 Cush. 551; *Westen v. Chamberlain*, 7 Cush. 404; *Hogue v. Davis*, 8 Grat. 4.

⁵ *Pickering v. Marsh*, 7 N. H. 192; *Cutter v. Emery*, 37 N. H. 567.

⁶ *Keith v. Goodwin*, 31 Vt. 268; *Harris v. Warner*, 13 Wend. 400.

⁷ *Turner v. Davies*, 2 Esp. 478; *Thomas v. Cook*, 8 B. & C. 728.

⁸ *Turner v. Davis*, 2 Esp. 478; *Clapp v. Rice*, 13 Gray, 403; *Taylor v. Savage*, 12 Mass. 98; *Davis v. Barrington*, 30 N. H. 517; *Cutter v. Emery*, 37 N. H. 567; *Barry v. Ransom*, 12 N. Y. 462; and cases cited *Wh. on Ev.* § 952.

⁹ *Norton v. Coons*, 2 Selden, 33; *McMillan v. Parkell*, 64 Mo. 286. That parties to commercial paper signed as co-sureties, parol evidence is, as between themselves, admissible to show, see *Reynolds v. Wheeler*, 10 C. B. N. S. 561.

pendent guarantor cannot be compelled to contribute to relieve a surety who is primarily responsible for the principal's debt.¹ Nor is the defendant liable to contribution if he become surety to oblige the plaintiff at the latter's request.² But a claim to contribution is not defeated by the mere fact that the debt on which the claim is made is secured by several contracts.³—No previous demand on the co-surety is necessary to sustain the suit.⁴—Inability of the principal to pay is not a condition precedent to recover.⁵—Whether the obligation be joint or joint and several, the principle is that he who relieves others concurrently liable with him from their burden is entitled to contribution from them in proportion to the amount of their relief.⁶ Hence, the executor of a deceased co-debtor is liable for contribution;⁷ though in cases of joint obligation the estate of a deceased surety is absolutely discharged both in law and equity, as against the creditor, but not as against a co-surety.⁸ The surety who pays may come down on the estate of the deceased surety.⁹ "It matters not, in case of a debt, whether the sureties are jointly and severally bound, or only severally, or whether their suretyship arises under the same obligation or instrument, or under divers obligations or instruments, if all the instruments are for the same identical debt."¹⁰ In such cases, if the representatives of the deceased obligor

¹ Longley v. Griggs, 10 Pick. 121. See Cutter v. Emery, 37 N. H. 567.

² Turner v. Davies, 2 Esp. 478; Taylor v. Savage, 12 Mass. 98; Apgar v. Hiler, 4 Zab. 812; and cases cited 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 894.

³ Dering v. Winchelsea, 2 Bos. & P. 270; Craythorne v. Swinborne, 14 Ves. 160.

⁴ Chaffee v. Jones, 19 Pick. 260; Collins v. Boyd, 14 Ala. 505. See *supra*, § 575.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 597 *et seq.*; Cowell v. Edwards, 2 B. & P. 268; Goodall v. Wentworth, 20 Me. 322; Odlin v. Greenleaf, 3 N. H. 270.

⁶ Kemp v. Finden, 12 M. & W. 421; Boulter v. Peplow, 9 C. B. 493; Sison v. Kidman, 4 Scott N. R. 429; Chaffee

v. Jones, 19 Pick. 260; Parker v. Ellis, 2 Sandf. 223; Armitage v. Pulver, 37 N. Y. 497. See McCune v. Belt, 45 Mo. 174.

⁷ Bachelder v. Fiske, 17 Mass. 464; Bradley v. Burwell, 3 Denio, 61; Barry v. Ransom, 12 N. Y. 462; Johnson v. Harvey, 84 N. Y. 363; Chipman v. Morrill, 20 Cal. 130; and cases cited *infra*, § 766.

⁸ *Ibid.* See Waters v. Riley, 2 Har. & G. 305; *infra*, §§ 820, 832.

⁹ *Infra*, §§ 766, 820. As to contribution by heirs of surety, see Stevens v. Tucker, 73 Ind. 73.

¹⁰ Story Eq. Jur. 12th ed. § 495; citing Dering v. Winchelsea, 1 Cox, 318; 2 B. & P. 270; Stirling v. Forrester, 3 Bligh, 590.

are liable, then contribution lies.¹ The payment, however, in order to sustain a claim for contribution, must have been obligatory;² though to make it such it is not necessary that a suit should be instituted. It is enough if the payment be one which the party making it could have been compelled to make.³ It makes no matter, in such case, what is the form the surety's liability takes; it is enough if he is legally bound.⁴ The promise to reimburse in such cases is a part of the contract assumed to exist between the co-sureties when they enter into the contract of suretyship.⁵—A party who unnecessarily contests a claim, cannot recover from his co-debtors their proportion of the expenses of litigation.⁶ The weight of authority, however, is that he is entitled to recover from his co-debtors their share in the costs of any litigation he may have judiciously resorted to for their joint protection.⁷ Contribution may in any view be obtained for acts incurred in a procedure jointly authorized by the co-sureties.⁸—In equity the co-debtor who pays is entitled to recover from the co-debtor he sues the proportion the latter would be required to pay, striking out such co-debtors as are insolvent;⁹ though it

¹ *Infra*, § 766.

² *Infra*, § 835.

³ *Supra*, § 761; *Pitt v. Purssord*, 8 M. & W. 538; *Davies v. Humphreys*, 6 M. & W. 153; *Odlin v. Greenleaf*, 3 N. H. 270; *Shaw v. Loud*, 12 Mass. 447; *Frith v. Sprague*, 14 Mass. 455; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 260; *Lucas v. Ins. Co.*, 6 Cow. 635; see for cases *supra*, § 761; *infra*, § 835.

⁴ *Beal v. Brown*, 13 Allen, 114. On the general question of liability, see *Kemp v. Findon*, 12 M. & W. 421; *Lidderdale v. Robinson*, 2 Brock. 160; *Fletcher v. Grover*, 11 N. H. 369; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 260; *Mitchell v. Sproul*, 5 J. J. Marsh. 270.

⁵ *Batard v. Hawes*, 2 E. & B. 287; *Peaslee v. Breed*, 10 N. H. 489, following in this respect the rule adopted in reference to the relations of the surety to the principal. *Appleton v. Bascom*, 3 Met. (Mass.) 169; *infra*, § 769.

⁶ *Kemp v. Findon*, 12 M. & W. 424; *Davis v. Emerson*, 17 Me. 64; *Fletcher v. Jackson*, 23 Vt. 593; *Beckley v. Munson*, 22 Conn. 279.

⁷ *Theob. on Prin. & Sur.* § 286; *Kemp v. Findon*, 12 M. & W. 421; *Davis v. Emerson*, 17 Me. 64; *Beckley v. Munson*, 22 Conn. 299; *Bonney v. Seeley*, 2 Wend. 481; *Leary v. Cheshire*, 3 Jones Eq. 170; *Cleveland v. Covington*, 3 Strob. 184; *Furnold v. Bank*, 44 Mo. 336; and see discussion in *Parsons*, i. 33-4; 1 Ch. Cont. 11th Am. ed. 894. As limiting such liabilities, see *Knight v. Hughes*, 3 C. & P. 467; *Roach v. Thompson*, M. & M. 487; *Boardman v. Page*, 11 N. H. 431.

⁸ *Edgar v. Knapp*, 5 M. & G. 75.

⁹ *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 B. & P. 268; *Hole v. Harrison*, 1 Ch. Cas. 246; *Henderson v. McDuffee*, 5 N. H. 38; *Mills v. Hyde*, 19 Vt. 59; see *Story on Cont.* § 1144. That the rules of law and equity

is in some jurisdictions otherwise at law, it being held that the plaintiff can only recover the proportion that the defendant would have to pay supposing all the co-debtors were solvent.¹ And in any view only the amount actually paid in excess can be recovered.²—Courts of equity, also, have held sureties, on payment of their principal's debt to the creditor, entitled to the benefit of all the collateral securities, both legal and equitable, which the creditor holds on account of the debt.³—The obligation of contribution is several; and hence one surety may release one of his co-sureties without affecting his right against the others.⁴—An agreement, also, by the creditor, giving time to one surety, does not relieve co-sureties from the duty of contribution.⁵ The discharge, also, of a surety from his principal debt, does not, unless that debt be in itself extinguished, release him from liability to his co-sureties.⁶—Where the plaintiff in a suit for contribution seeks to reimburse himself for a loss in an illegal adventure, and where the object of the suit is to indemnify him for an act condemned by the *lex fori*, he cannot obtain the aid of the court.⁷

as to principal and surety are substantially the same, see *Cooper v. Evans*, L. R. 4 Eq. 45.

¹ *Browne v. Lee*, 6 B. & C. 689; *Cowell v. Edwards*, 2 B. & P. 268; *Currier v. Fellows*, 7 Foster, N. H. 366; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 265; cited *Parsons*, ii. 35.

² *Tarr v. Ravenscroft*, 12 Grat. 642; see *Fletcher v. Grover*, 11 N. H. 368. In *Kelly v. Page*, 7 Gray, 213, it was held that a surety in a bail bond, who has settled with the obligee, and taken an assignment of the judgment obtained by the obligee against the two sureties, can only recover on the judgment against his fellow surety half the amount of the judgment.

³ *Story Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. § 499; *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 159; *Jones v. Davis*, 4 Russ. 277; *Hodgson v. Shaw*, 3 My. & K. 183; *Gould v. Fuller*, 18 Me. 364; *Wilcox v. Bank*, 7

Allen, 270; *Bowditch v. Green*, 3 Met. 360; *Atwood v. Vincent*, 17 Conn. 576; *McLean v. Towle*, 3 Sandf. 117; *York v. Landis*, 65 N. C. 535; *State Bank v. Campbell*, 2 Rich. Eq. 180. That the surety may insist on an assignment of securities, see *Story Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. § 499 a.

⁴ *Kelby v. Steel*, 5 Esp. 192; *Graham v. Robinson*, 2 T. R. 282; *Birkley v. Presgrave*, 1 East, 220; *Fletcher v. Jackson*, 23 Vt. 591; *Parker v. Ellis*, 2 Sandf. 223; *Crowdus v. Shelby*, 6 J. J. Marsh. 61; *Parsons*, ii. 35; *Fletcher v. Grover*, 11 N. H. 368.

⁵ *Dunn v. Slee*, Holt, N. P. 399; *Draper v. Wald*, 13 Gray, 580.

⁶ *Clapp v. Rice*, 15 Gray, 557; see *Warner v. Morrison*, 3 Allen, 566.

⁷ *Booth v. Hodgson*, 6 T. R. 405; *Merryweather v. Nixan*, 8 T. R. 186; *Farebrother v. Ansley*, 1 Camp. 343; *supra*, § 340.

Where, however, the suit is not to indemnify the plaintiff in wrong-doing, but to obtain money inequitably retained by the defendant, the fact that the money was the produce of an adventure technically illegal is no defence.¹

§ 766. We have already noticed instances in which the liability of co-sureties and co-guarantors to contribute has been held to be limited by special agreement.² The right to contribution is subject to such limitations; and each surety may by the common contract fix the amount of his liability.³ A surety may also limit the particular parties for whom he is to be bound.⁴ A party, also, who becomes surety to oblige another cannot be liable to such other for contribution.⁵ It is not until the surety pays in excess of his share that his claim against his co surety originates.⁶ Contribution, also, may be limited by agreement between joint debtors contracting or extinguishing particular indebtedness.⁷ But although the survivor of one of several co-debtors may be exclusively liable to the creditor, he may come down on the estates of his co-debtors for contribution; and the same duty of contribution exists as when all the parties are living and one is compelled to pay the entire debt.⁸ Individual partners, also, when compelled to pay the partnership debt, may obtain contribution according to the proportion established by the partnership articles,⁹ though the rules of technical contributionship do not in such cases apply.¹⁰—It is not necessary that the parties should have signed the same contract; it is enough if they

Contri-
bution
limited by
contract
between
parties.

¹ *Supra*, § 354; *Betts v. Gibbons*, 2 A. & E. 57; *Adamson v. Jarvis*, 4 Bing. 66; *Bailey v. Bussing*, 28 Conn. 455.

² *Supra*, §§ 756 *et seq.*; and see *Craythorne v. Swinburne*, 14 Ves. 160.

³ 1 Story's Eq. Jur. 12th ed. §§ 495 *et seq.*; *Pendlebury v. Walker*, 4 Y. & C. 424.

⁴ *Harris v. Warner*, 13 Wend. 400; Story's Eq. Jur. 12th ed. § 498.

⁵ *Turner v. Davies*, 2 Esp. 478.

⁶ *Davies v. Humphreys*, 6 M. & G. 153; *supra*, § 758.

⁷ *Turner v. Davies*, 2 Esp. 479; *Thomas v. Cook*, 8 B. & C. 728; *Harris v. Warner*, 13 Wend. 400.

⁸ *Supra*, § 765; *Prior v. Hembrow*, 8 M. & W. 889; *Haughton v. Bayley*, 9 Ired. L. 337; and cases cited *supra*, § 765.

⁹ *Infra*, § 767; *Beresford v. Browning*, L. R. 1 C. D. 30.

¹⁰ *Pearson v. Skelton*, 1 M. & W. 504; *Sadler v. Nixon*, 5 B. & Ad. 936.

were jointly responsible for the same debt, either as co-principals or co-sureties.¹

§ 767. The principles which have just been stated apply to payments by directors of an association who have authority to contract debts for the association and who seek contribution from fellow-members. They may be personally responsible; but they are entitled to be reimbursed by those whom they represent.²

Same principle extended to members of associations.

This applies *a fortiori* to cases where there is an express contract of suretyship.³—So far as concerns partners, the proper mode of obtaining contribution is by proceedings in equity, by which a balance can be properly struck and the question of actual indebtedness determined on a full survey of the accounts.⁴

§ 768. A surety who pays his principal's debt is entitled (supposing he has no security covering the debt) to come on his principal; and though this may be sustained on the ground that the principal when he obtains the surety's aid implicitly promises to reimburse, yet it may also be explained by the rule before us, that a person who as another's representative is required to make a payment, can recover that payment from the person represented.⁵ Hence, an accommodation signer of a bill of exchange who is compelled to pay, may recover the money he paid from the party whom he signed to accommodate.⁶

Surety who pays principal's debt entitled to come on principal.

¹ *Dering v. Winchelsea*, 2 B. & P. 270; *Norton v. Coons*, 3 Denio, 130. *Ferrand*, 6 B. & C. 439; *Hall v. Smith*, 5 How. U. S. 96; *Smith v. Sayward*, 5

² *Supra*, § 757; *Tyrrell v. Washburn*, 6 Allen, 466; see *Bailey v. Macaulay*, 13 Q. B. 115; *Batard v. Hawes*, 2 E. & B. 287; *Boulter v. Peplow*, 9 C. B. 493; *Murray v. Bogert*, 14 Johns. 318. As to stockholders of corporations, see *Wincock v. Turpin*, 96 Ill. 135. 322; *Pearson v. Parker*, 3 N. H. 366; *Appleton v. Bascom*, 3 Met. 169; *Powell v. Smith*, 8 Johns. 249; *Ward v. Henry*, 5 Conn. 596; *Ainslie v. Wilson*, 7 Cow. 662; *Lowry v. Bank*, 2 W. & S. 210; *Gray v. Bowles*, 1 Dev. & B. 437. In *Pownal v. Ferrand* an indorser of a bill of exchange, being sued by the holder, was held entitled to recover the money paid from the acceptor; see *supra*, §§ 759 *et seq.*

³ *Coburn v. Wheelock*, 34 N. Y. 440.

⁴ *Story's Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. §§ 504 *et seq.*; and see cases cited on partnership in § 766.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 79, citing *Toussaint v. Martinnant*, 2 T. R. 105; *Pownal v.*

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Driver v. Burton*, 17 Q. B. 989; see *Gamsey v. Allen*, 27 Me. 366.

Bail, also, can recover from the principal all expenses they have legitimately incurred in consequence of their obligation on his account.¹ When, also, the surety of a surety, being legally bound so to do, pays the debt of the principal, the same rule applies, though the payment was made without a request from the principal.² An administrator of a surety, paying personally the principal's debt, is also entitled to recover from the principal.³—The right of action accrues from the time the money is paid,⁴ though the promise dates back to the time when the engagement of suretyship between the principal and the surety was made.⁵—But a surety extinguishing a principal's debt in part, can only recover the sum of money that he has actually paid.⁶

§ 769. A surety who receives money from the principal is obliged to share this money with his co-sureties; and where an action for contribution is brought by one surety against another, the plaintiff or defendant (as the case may be) is obliged to account for the sum thus received.⁷ The same rule has been held to apply to securities received.⁸—Where a surety obtains from the principal debtor a security for the liability he has undertaken, he is bound to bring into hotch-pot, for the relief of his co-sureties, any benefit which he receives under the security, though he originally bargained with the principal debtor that he should have the security, and though this bargain and the fact of the security having been given were unknown at the time to the co-sureties.⁹

¹ *Fisher v. Fallows*, 5 Esp. 171.

² *Hall v. Smith*, 5 How. U. S. 96.

³ *Mowry v. Adams*, 14 Mass. 327; *Williams v. Moore*, 9 Pick. 432.

⁴ *Davies v. Humphreys*, 6 M. & W. 153; *Kearsley v. Cole*, 16 M. & W. 128.

⁵ *Batard v. Hawes*, 2 E. & B. 287; *Appleton v. Bascom*, 3 Met. (Mass.) 169; *Lowry v. Bank*, 2 W. & S. 210; *Dobyns v. McGovern*, 15 Mo. 662.

⁶ *Supra*, § 758; *Parker v. U. S.*,

Peters C. C. 266; *Morrison v. Berkey*, 7 S. & R. 238; *Pursel v. Ellis*, 5 W. & S. 525.

⁷ *Bachelder v. Fisk*, 17 Mass. 464.

⁸ *Theob. on Princ. & Sur.* § 283; 1 *Story's Eq. Jur.* § 499; *Story on Cont.* § 1152; but see *Bowditch v. Green*, 3 Met. 360; *Himes v. Keller*, 3 W. & S. 401; see *supra*, § 765.

⁹ *Steel v. Dixon*, L. R. 17 Ch. D. 825.

§ 770. An insurer, who is compelled to pay a loss, is, on the same reasoning, entitled to recover from any party primarily liable for the loss against which the insurer insured. The insurer may be regarded as paying as the representative of such parties, and hence, entitled to recover from them. Hence, an insurer when compelled to pay a loss by fire is entitled to recover from the party negligently causing the fire;¹ and an insurer compelled to pay a loss by storm is entitled to recover from the person negligently causing the shipwreck.²

Insurer may recover from person causing the loss.

§ 771. As has been already seen,³ money paid for an illegal purpose, but not yet appropriated to such purpose, can be recovered back in this form of suit. There can be no recovery, however, of money not only contributed to, but employed intentionally in consummating an illegal design.⁴ Nor can a party who is compelled to pay for a joint tort recover contribution from his confederates in the tort.⁵ It is otherwise when there was no complicity between the parties, as in cases where one co-proprietor is made liable for the negligence of a servant, in which case he can recover contribution from his co-proprietor, neither party being personally derelict.⁶

Money contributed to illegal enterprise cannot be recovered back; nor can tortfeasor recover contribution.

¹ *Commercial Union Ins. Co. v. Lister*, L. R. 9 Ch. 483; *North British Ins. Co. v. London Ins. Co.*, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 569.

² *Yates v. Whyte*, 4 Bing. N. C. 272; *Simpson v. Thompson*, L. R. 3 Ap. Ca. 279; see *Leake*, 2d ed. 82.

³ *Supra*, § 354.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *supra*, § 340.

⁵ *Supra*, § 340; *Merryweather v. Nixan*, 8 T. R. 186; *Armstrong v. Toler*, 11 Wheat. 258; *Campbell v. Phelps*, 1 Pick. 65; *Lowell v. R. R.*, 23 Pick. 24; *Peck v. Ellis*, 2 John. Ch. 131.

⁶ *Woolley v. Batte*, 2 C. & P. 417; see *Pearson v. Skelton*, 1 M. & W. 504.

CHAPTER XXV.

ACCOUNT STATED.

Where debt is admitted, promise to pay is implied, § 774.	No defence that indebtedness was merely equitable, § 777.
An account may be evidence in favor of party stating, § 775.	Account stated not conclusive, § 778.
Account stated proved by parol, § 776.	Admission must be specific, § 779.
	Account settled between parties establishes only balance due, § 780.

§ 774. AN account stated was, by a fiction of the old law of pleading, supposed to exist whenever one party admitted an indebtedness to another. In our present practice, adopting the fiction in this respect, when a balance is thus admitted, a promise to pay it is implied. To whatever sum is admitted, the hypothesis of an account stated is applicable as the starting of a new indebtedness.¹ A single charge may be the basis of such an admission, or a series of charges, as the case may be.²—Among business men, when the usage is to return promptly accounts submitted to them, retention of an account without exception may be regarded as an admission of its correctness.³ It is otherwise, however, when there is no such usage. In such case the retention of an account does not afford the slightest inference of approval of its contents. And this is the ordinary rule with tradesmen's bills.⁴

¹ *Holmes v. De Camp*, 1 Johns. 34.

Montgomerie v. Ivers, 17 Johns. 38 ;

² Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879)

Martens v. Nottebohm, 4 Grat. 163.

372 ; *Leake*, 2d ed. 119 ; *Anson*, 325 ;

³ *Wiggins v. Burkham*, 10 Wall.

and see, generally, *Knowles v. Michell*,

129 ; *Hayes v. Kelley*, 116 Mass. 300 ;

13 East, 249 ; *Jarrett v. Leonard*, 2 M.

Tams v. Levis, 42 Penn. St. 402.

& S. 265 ; *Highmore v. Primrose*, 5 M.

⁴ *Gibney v. Marchey*, 34 N. Y. 301 ;

& S. 65 ; *Irving v. Veitch*, 3 M. & W.

Champion v. Joslyn, 44 N. Y. 653 ;

106 ; *Hopkins v. Logan*, 5 M. & W.

and other cases cited, Wh. on Ev. §

241 ; see *Perkins v. Hart*, 11 Wheat.

1140.

256 ; *Holmes v. De Camp*, 1 Johns. 36 ;

§ 775. When both parties have access to the books from which the account is drawn, and have authority to object from time to time to the mode of keeping the same, an account rendered may be evidence in favor of one of the parties when sent to the other and retained by him without objection.¹

An account may be evidence in favor of party stating.

§ 776. An account stated may be made by word of mouth; or it may consist of a short memorandum in writing, capable of being explained by parol;² or it may be embodied in a note or other document indicating indebtedness, the reception of the written admission not excluding proof of oral admission.³ Between parties in privity with each other, negotiable paper may be evidence of an account stated,⁴ and so may an I. O. U.⁵ But an account stated is merged in a contract under seal when covering the same indebtedness and when the sealed document was given to secure the debt.⁶ No merger, however, exists unless the sealed instrument be for the same specific debt.⁷

Account stated proved by parol.

§ 777. It is no defence to a suit on an account stated that the debt was due only in equity. A trustee, for instance, may make himself liable on an account stated by stating his indebtedness on his trust receipts, though for these, independently of his admission, he could have been sued only in a court of

No defence that indebtedness was merely equitable.

¹ *Symonds v. Gas Co.*, 11 Beav. 283; *Boardman v. Jackson*, 2 Ball & B. 382; *Lodge v. Prichard*, 3 De Gex, M. & G. 906; *Anding v. Levy*, 57 Miss. 51; see *Wh. on Ev.* § 1140.

² *Wh. on Ev.* § 1122 *et seq.*, 1133; *Moreland v. Isaac*, 20 Beav. 392; *Carrier v. R. R.*, 31 N. H. 209; see *Gilson v. Stewart*, 7 Watts, 100.

³ *Singleton v. Barrett*, 2 C. & J. 368; *Newhall v. Holt*, 6 M. & W. 662; *Lockwood v. Thorne*, 18 N. Y. 285; *Champion v. Joslyn*, 44 N. Y. 656; *Stowe v. Sewall*, 3 St. & P. 67.

⁴ *Wheatley v. Williams*, 1 M. & W.

533; *Grant v. Vaughan*, 3 Burr. 1516; *Burmester v. Hogarth*, 11 M. & W. 97; *Bowers v. Hurd*, 10 Mass. 427; *Fisher v. Fisher*, 98 Mass. 303; *Mowry v. Bishop*, 5 Paige, 98.

⁵ *Douglass v. Holme*, 4 P. & D. 685; *Jacobs v. Fisher*, 1 C. B. 178; *Wilson v. Wilson*, 14 C. B. 616; *Fesenmayer v. Adcock*, 16 M. & W. 449; *Curtis v. Rickards*, 1 M. & Gr. 47.

⁶ *Supra*, § 684; *Leake*, 2d ed. 153, 935; *Owen v. Homan*, 3 Mac. & G. 407; *Price v. Moulton*, 10 C. B. 574.

⁷ *Hoyt v. Wilkinson*, 10 Pick. 31.

equity.¹ The same distinction applies to an indebtedness admitted at the close of partnership accounts.²

§ 778. Even though the account was settled definitely between the parties, it does not conclude them, but Account stated not conclusive. parol, or other extrinsic evidence, is admissible to show that it was based on error,³ and that there was no actual indebtedness from the defendant to the plaintiff,⁴ or that there was no consideration, or that the consideration was illegal.⁵ Until final settlement such accounts are always open to correction; and even after settlement on proof of mistake.⁶ To the rule, however, that an account stated is only *prima facie* proof, there is an exception in those cases in which there is an estoppel based on mutual concessions, or some new consideration which it would be contrary to good faith to impeach. But a stated account not sustained by such new consideration or estoppel may be impeached for mistake or error, whether of omissions or of entry.⁷

§ 779. To sustain an implied promise of this class, the admission must be specific. It is not enough for a Admission must be specific. party to admit a vague indebtedness,⁸ or to say that he thinks he has received the money litigated;⁹ or

¹ *Pardoe v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 456; *Roper v. Holland*, 3 A. & E. 99; *supra*, § 726.

² *Foster v. Allanson*, 2 T. R. 479; *Wray v. Mileston*, 5 M. & W. 21; see *supra*, §§ 722 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 807.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 1133; 1 Story, Eq. Jur. § 524; *Thomas v. Hawkes*, 8 M. & W. 140; *Dails v. Lloyd*, 12 Q. B. 531; *Harden v. Gordon*, 2 Mason, 541; *Perkins v. Hart*, 11 Wheat. 256; *Nichols v. Alsop*, 6 Conn. 477; *Young v. Hill*, 67 N. Y. 162; *Barger v. Collins*, 7 H. & J. 213; *Carroll v. Ridgaway*, 8 Md. 328; *Goodin v. Armstrong*, 19 Ohio, 44; *Kirby v. Watt*, 19 Ill. 393.

⁴ *Gough v. Findon*, 7 Ex. 48; *Lemere v. Elliott*, 6 H. & N. 656; *Petch v. Lyon*, 9 Q. B. 147; *Perkins v. Hart*, 11 Wheat. 237; *Young v. Hill*, 67 N. Y. 162; *Halleck v. State*, 11 Ohio, 400;

Gradwohl v. Harris, 29 Cal. 150; *Murdock v. Finney*, 21 Mo. 138; see *Hoyt v. McLaughlin*, 52 Wis. 280.

⁵ *Kennedy v. Brown*, 13 C. B. N. S. 677.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. §§ 1021, 1028, 1123.

⁷ See cases cited *supra*, §§ 171 *et seq.*, 205 *et seq.*; *Wiggins v. Burkham*, 10 Wall. 129; *Lockwood v. Thorne*, 18 N. Y. 292; *Hutchinson v. Bank*, 48 Barb. 324; *Ruffner v. Hewitt*, 7 W. Va. 608; *Warner v. Myrick*, 16 Minn. 91; *Wharton v. Anderson*, Sup. Ct. Minn. 1882.

⁸ Wh. on Ev. § 1089; *Green v. Davies*, 4 B. & C. 235; *Lane v. Hill*, 18 Q. B. 252; *Chambers v. Claws*, 21 Wal. 317; *Clarendon v. Weston*, 16 Vt. 332; *Gibney v. Marohy*, 34 N. Y. 301.

⁹ *Hughes v. Thorpe*, 5 M. & W. 656; *Smith v. Jones*, 15 Johns. R. 229.

to say that some money is due without designating the amount or acceding to the plaintiff's designation.¹ Mere admission of reception without recognition, either directly or indirectly, of indebtedness, will not sustain the implication of a promise.² But the allegation of account stated was held to be sustained where a debtor, in answer to an account, inclosed an order for money, and promised to pay the remainder next week;³ where certain items of an account were passed over without objection, to one item alone objection being made;⁴ and where the defendant handed to the plaintiff a memorandum of items of account, to which was attached a promise to pay the plaintiff a specified amount, being the value of a protested bill, it being further stated that the money was to be paid out of the proceeds of certain provisions and lumber.⁵

§ 780. From the account stated, in the sense just given, is to be distinguished an account settled between parties in which the debits are set off against the credits, and in which a balance is struck. In such cases the plaintiff suing for the balance elects to treat his claim as *pro tanto* extinguished by the claim set off on the other side.⁶ But when the account is not settled between the parties, and the plaintiff merely puts in evidence the defendant's account, this does not preclude the plaintiff from disputing the defendant's entries in his own favor.⁷

Account settled between parties establishes only balance due.

¹ Teal v. Anty, 2 B. & B. 99.

² Tucker v. Barrow, 7 B. & C. 623.

³ Peacock v. Harris, 10 East, 104; see Vinal v. Burrill, 16 Pick. 401; Sugar v. Davis, 13 Ga. 462.

⁴ Chisman v. Count, 2 M. & G. 307; Wh. on Ev. § 1140.

⁵ Montgomerie v. Ivers, 17 Johns. 38;

and see generally Claire v. Claire, 10 Neb. 54.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 122; Ashby v. James, 11 M. & W. 542; Callander v. Howard, 10 C. B. 290; Laycock v. Pickles, 4 B. & S. 497.

⁷ Rose v. Savery, 2 Bing. N. C. 145;

see Wh. on Ev. § 1133.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PARTIES.

I. PLAINTIFFS.

Only party to contract can sue on it, § 784.

In some states it is held that a third party can sue on a contract for his benefit, § 785.

Such cases explicable on ground of novation or trust or negligence, § 786.

Illustrated in case of purchaser of mortgaged property, § 786 *a*.

Importance of restricting right to sue, § 787.

In deeds *inter partes* only parties can join, § 788.

On a deed poll party designated may sue, § 789.

Exceptions to general rule as to provisions for children, § 790.

Exception as to receiver of telegrams, § 791.

Exception as to consignee of goods, § 792.

Bill of lading passes by indorsement, § 793.

Exception in suits for money had and received, § 794.

Negotiable paper establishes liability to holder though unknown at the time of making, § 795.

Party may be estopped from denying negotiability, § 796.

Whether bonds are negotiable depends upon terms of document, § 797.

Novation requires creditor's assent, § 798.

Cestui que trust cannot sue unless party, § 799.

Plaintiff may depend for ascertainment on contingency, § 800.

Illustrated by offer of rewards, circular letters, and auction sales, § 801.

Principal, though undisclosed, can sue, § 802.

Real parties may be proved by parol, § 803.

Office or relationship may be thus explained, § 804.

Party cannot contract with himself, § 805.

Joining other parties makes no difference, § 806.

Partner cannot sue partnership at law, § 807.

Resolutions by a company to pay money to a third person do not entitle him to sue, unless he personally negotiate with the company, § 808.

II. DEFENDANTS.

Assent of party charged necessary to bind him, § 809.

Only parties to a contract can be sued on it, § 810.

Illustrated in case of agents signing in their own names, § 810 *a*.

Exceptions of undisclosed principal, and of companies bound by promoters, § 811.

Action of tort may be maintained for abuse of contractual relations, § 812.

By novation new debtor may be introduced, § 813.

III. JOINT PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS.

1. *Plaintiffs.*

All joint promisees must join, § 814.

Otherwise when they are several, § 815.

Question one of construction and parol explanation, § 816.

Plaintiffs cannot sue both jointly and severally, § 817.

All partners should join, § 818.

Qualification as to one of several contractors suing contractually, § 819.

On death of joint promisee debt survives, § 820.

One joint promisee may release, § 821.

Non-joinder of plaintiffs unless amended is fatal, § 822.

Unamended misjoinder of plaintiffs is fatal if inconsistent with cause of action, § 823.

2. Defendants.

Joint defendants must be sued jointly, § 824.

Debts may be joint or several, § 825.

Question is one of construction, § 826.

Debt due on its face from two or more debtors is joint, § 827.

Otherwise if debt is payable individually, § 828.

Debtors may make themselves severally liable to each of several creditors, § 829.

Liability of partners is joint and several, § 830.

Release of one joint debtor releases all, § 831.

Each joint debtor liable for the whole, but on death liability pursues survivors, § 832.

Omission of joint promisor only matter for plea in abatement, § 833.

Misjoinder if unamended is fatal, § 834.

Joint debtor paying more than his share may recover from others, § 835.

IV. ASSIGNEES.

Assignee by modern practice may sue, § 836.

Assignment authorizes use of assignor's name, § 837.

Assignability distinguished from negotiability, § 838.

No particular form is necessary, § 839.

Debtor's assent constitutes contractual relation, § 840.

Lex fori determines whether assignee can sue in his own name, § 841.

Assignment subject to equities between assignor and debtor, § 842.

Equities to be determined by the law to which the debt is subject, § 843.

Set-off must be due at time of assignment, § 844.

Notice to debtor of assignment necessary to protect assignee, § 845.

Parties may contract to assign free from equities, § 846.

So as to orders for delivery of goods, § 847.

To a suit by assignee it is a defence that the assignor had first to perform duties exclusively personal, § 848.

I. PLAINTIFFS.

§ 784. We have already seen that privity, or reciprocal recognition, is essential to establish a contractual relation.¹ Since a suit on a contract cannot be sustained unless there be a contractual relation between the parties, it follows that no one can sue on a contract to which he was not a party.² It would, in fact, be destructive

Only party to contract can sue on it.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 184, 506.

² Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 3; Tweddle v. Atkinson, 1 B. & S. 393; Price

v. Easton, 1 B. & Ad. 433. See Anderson v. Longden, 1 Wheat. 85; Shear v. Mallory, 13 Johns. 497.

to society if strangers could intervene and undertake litigations in accordance with their own interests and tastes; and such intrusion can only be prevented by the rigid application of the rule that contracts can only be sued on by parties.¹ Of course there may be some cases in which this works hardly; but the rule is so wise and so vital that even in hard cases it continues to be applied. Thus, it has been held that the managers of an association for the mutual insurance of ships could not vest in an agent the power to sue in his own name for sums payable from members for premiums.² A written agreement, also, by a third party, to a constable, to go bail for the debt and costs of an execution in the constable's hands, must be sued out in the constable's name, and not in the name of the plaintiff in the execution.³ A deed *inter partes*, also, cannot operate to release a person not a party, and can only be sued on by a party.⁴ A composition deed, also, does not authorize any creditors to bring suit unless they are named specifically or are included in a general covenant for their benefit;⁵ though it would be otherwise, on the principles above stated, were the creditors suing on such contracts to prove that they did some particular acts—*e. g.*, executed releases—in consideration of the assignment.⁶—To the same effect is a ruling in 1880 in the English court of appeals,⁷ where Jessel, M. R., said: "A mere agreement between A. and B. that B. shall pay C. (an agreement to which C. is not a party either directly or indirectly), will not prevent A. and B. from coming to an agreement the next day releasing the old one." And in a subsequent case,⁸ it was held, as we have seen, that a provision in articles of association that A. shall be solicitor of the company on certain terms, gives him no right of action

¹ The principle has been pushed to its extreme limit in cases in which it is held that a creditor cannot authorize a third person to sue in his own name on a debt due the creditor. *Hybart v. Parker*, 4 C. B. N. S. 209.

² *Gray v. Pearson*, L. R. 5 C. P. 568; *Evans v. Hooper*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 45.

³ *Cummings v. Klapp*, 5 W. & S. 511.

⁴ *Storer v. Gordon*, 3 M. & S. 308.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 445; *Chesterfield v. Hawkins*, 3 H. & C. 677; *Gurrin v. Kopera*, 3 H. & C. 694; *Gresty v. Gibson*, 4 H. & C. 28; *Reeves v. Watts*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 412.

⁶ See *supra*, §§ 24, 527.

⁷ *Empress Engineering Co. in re*, L. R. 16 Ch. 125.

⁸ *Eley v. Ass. Co.*, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 88.

against the company.¹ It is true that at one time it was held in England that on an agreement between A. and B. for the benefit of C., a child of B., suit could be brought by C.² This, however, is no longer law in England,³ where it is now firmly settled that contracts can be sued on only by parties.⁴ In

¹ In a much earlier case, *Pigott v. Thompson*, 3 B. & P. 147, it was held that where a contract was made with certain local commissioners to pay rent "to the treasurer of the commissioners," the commissioners must bring suit, not the treasurer.

² *Dutton v. Pool*, 1 Vent. 318. See *Felton v. Dickinson*, 10 Mass. 287; *Schermerhoyn v. Vanderheyden*, 1 Johns. 139; see *infra*, § 790.

³ *Tweddle v. Atkinson*, *ut supra*.

⁴ Mr. Dicey (*Parties*, Am. ed. 1879, 81) states the rule as follows: "The person to sue for the breach of a simple contract must be the person from whom the consideration for the promise moves," citing *Smart v. Chell*, 7 Dowl. 785. See *Anson*, 900 *et seq.* As to the importance of care in this respect, see *Chitty on Pl.* 16th Am. ed. 1879, 1 *et seq.*—So far as concerns merely technical variance, difficulties are now obviated by statutes in force in England and in this country permitting amendments. See *infra*, § 822.

As adhering to the English rule, and conforming to the position taken in the text, see *Segars v. Segars*, 71 Me. 530; *Butterfield v. Hartshorn*, 7 N. H. 345; *Warren v. Batchelder*, 15 N. H. 129; *Lapham v. Green*, 9 Vt. 407; *Hall v. Huntson*, 17 Vt. 244; *Mellen v. Whipple*, 1 Gray, 321; *Field v. Crawford*, 6 Gray, 116; *Exchange Bk. v. Rice*, 107 Mass. 39; *Pettee v. Reppard*, 120 Mass. 522; *Cottage St. Ch. v. Kendall*, 121 Mass. 528 (discussed *supra*, § 528); *Reed v. Bank*, 127 Mass. 295; *Meserve v. Bacon*, 125 Mass. 499; *Moore v. Moore*, 127 Mass. 22; *Butler v. Frank*,

128 Mass. 29; *Stoddard v. Ham*, 129 Mass. 383; *Treat v. Stanton*, 14 Conn. 445; *Colt v. Ives*, 31 Conn. 25; *Burnett v. Jersey City*, 31 N. J. Eq. 341; *Owings v. Owings*, 1 Har. & G. 484; *Ross v. Milne*, 12 Leigh, 204; *Litchfield v. Garrett*, 10 Mich. 426; *Weathers v. Ray*, 4 Dana, 474; but see *infra*, § 785; *Allen v. Thomas*, 3 Metc. Ky. 198; *McLaren v. Hutchinson*, 18 Cal. 80. Cf. *Johnston v. U. S.*, 13 Ct. of Cl. 217.

See, also, *National Bank v. Grand Lodge*, 98 U. S. 123, where a corporation adopted a resolution assuming the payment of certain bonds of an association, provided that the association should issue stock to the corporation to the amount of the bonds, as the bonds were paid. It was held that holders of the bonds could not compel, by a suit in their own name, the corporation to pay the bonds.

In *Nat. Bk. v. Grand Lodge*, 98 U. S. 123, *ut supra*, Strong, J., said: "The resolution of the Grand Lodge was but a proposition made to the Masonic Hall Association, and, when accepted, the resolution and acceptance constituted at most only an executory contract *inter partes*. It was a contract made for the benefit of the association and of the grand lodge—made that the latter might acquire the ownership of stock of the former, and that the former might obtain relief from its liabilities. The holders of the bonds were not parties to it, and there was no privity between them and the lodge. They may have had an indirect interest in the performance of the undertakings of the parties, as they would have in an agreement by

equity as well as in law the right to sue is restricted to those who are parties to the contract. Thus, a bill for specific performance can only be brought by those who are parties to the contract, and "persons strangers to the contract, and therefore neither entitled to the right nor subject to the liabilities which arise out of it, are as much strangers to a proceeding to enforce the execution of it as they are to a proceeding to re-

which the lodge should undertake to lend money to the association, on contract to buy its stock to enable it to pay its debts; but that is a very different thing from the privity necessary to enable them to enforce the contract by suits in their own names. We do not propose to enter at large upon a consideration of the inquiry how far privity of contract between a plaintiff and defendant is necessary to the maintenance of an action of assumpsit. The subject has been much debated, and the decisions are not at all reconcilable. No doubt the general rule is that such a privity must exist. But there are confessedly many exceptions to it. One of them, and by far the most frequent one, is the case where, under a contract between two persons, assets have come to the promisor's hands or under his control which in equity belong to a third person. In such case it is held that the third person may sue in his own name. But then the suit is founded rather on the implied undertaking the law raises from the possession of the assets than on the express promise. Another exception is where the plaintiff is the beneficiary solely interested in the promise, as where one person contracts with another to pay money or deliver some valuable thing to a third. But where a debt already exists from one person to another, a promise by a third person to pay such debt being primarily for the benefit of the original debtor, and to relieve him from liability to pay it (there being no novation), he

has a right of action against the promisor for his own indemnity; and if the original creditor can also sue, the promisor would be liable to two separate actions, and therefore the rule is that the original creditor cannot sue. His case is not an exception from the general rule that privity of contract is required." And see *Johnston v. U. S.*, 13 Ct. of Cl. 217.

Judge Perkins, in a note to the 16th Am. ed. of Ch. on Pl. (1879), after citing some of the above cases, says: "It seems to be the general rule in the American states, that the plaintiff in an action on a simple contract must be the person from whom the consideration of the contract actually moved, and that a stranger to the consideration cannot sue on the contract." But though this is the right rule in principle, we cannot, in view of the many conflicting cases above given, regard it as generally accepted in the United States.

It should be added that *Sailly v. Cleveland*, 10 Wend. 156; *Hubbert v. Borden*, 6 Whart. 79; and *Blymire v. Boistle*, 6 Watts, 182, cited by Judge Perkins, are of questionable application to the rule given by him.

In *Bohanan v. Pope*, 42 Me. 93, A. contracted to haul logs for E., who was to pay the men engaged by A. D. was engaged by A. for this purpose, and it was held that when he elected to sue A., this exhausted his remedy, and that he could not afterwards sue E.

cover damages for the breach of it.”¹ Hence, “in a suit to enforce a contract for the sale of an estate that is under mortgage, made by the mortgagor, the mortgagee cannot be properly joined as a party; although his concurrence may be necessary to the conveyance.”² “Nor in a suit on a contract of sale by the mortgagee under a power of sale, can the mortgagor be joined as a party.”³

¹ Per Cottenham, L. C., in *Tasker v. Small*, 3 M. & Cr. 69; *Wood v. White*, 4 M. & C. R. 460; *Paterson v. Long*, 5 Beav. 186.

² Leake, 2d ed. 442; citing *Tasker v. Small*, 3 M. & Cr. 69.

³ *Ibid.*; *Corder v. Morgan*, 18 Ves. 344; *Harry v. Davey*, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 721.

According to Mr. Pollock (3d ed. 219), “the doctrines of equity are not so free from doubt. There is clear and distinct authority for these propositions: when two persons, for valuable consideration as between themselves, contract to do some act for the benefit of another person not a party to the contract—(1) That person cannot enforce the contract against either of the contracting parties, at all events, if not nearly and legitimately related to one of them. *Colyear v. Mulgrave*, 2 Kee. 81. Probably the only exception is that mentioned above, in favor of children provided for by marriage settlement. (2) But either contracting party may enforce it against the other, although the person to be benefited had nothing to do with the consideration. *Davenport v. Bishopp*, 2 Y. & C. 451; 1 Ph. 698, 704. On the other hand, the case of *Gregory v. Williams*, 3 Mer. 582, shows that a third person for whose benefit a contract is made may join as co-plaintiff with one of the actual contracting parties against the other, and insist on the arrangement being carried out.” But this case can be reconciled with the other authori-

ties on the ground that what the plaintiff sued on was virtually a declaration of trust, in which the other parties had joined. See *Empress Engineering Co. in re*, L. R. 16 Ch. D. 125-129.

There can be no question that by the Roman classical standards, no person can sue on a contract to which he is not a party. Whether this continues in force as part of the Roman common law, and how far it is modified by recent codes, are questions which have given rise to conflicts of opinion at least as great as those between the courts of this country as to the rights of third parties to sue.

Vangerow, III. (7th ed.) § 608, after a careful examination of the Roman standards, holds that a third party can only sue in cases where the transaction may be considered under the special facts as *negotiorum gestio*.

Windscheid (Pandekt. II. § 316) distinguishes with great emphasis between contracts for the benefit of third parties and agencies. The promisee in contracts for the benefit of third parties, is the party, he holds, who is to sue, though he admits exceptions: (1) where an assignment is actually made for, and accepted by the third party; and (2), where there is privity between the debtor and the third party.

A treatise on the same topic by Bähr will be found in 6 Ihering Jahr. 1863, No. 3. By Bähr the right is rested in agency. The *primus* in accepting the promise did so as agent of the *tertius*.

The Prussian Landrecht, I. 5, pro-

§ 786. Many of the cases, however, cited to show that a stranger can maintain an action on a contract, are explicable

person to another, from the performance of which a third would derive a benefit, gives a right of action to such third party, he being neither privy to the contract nor the consideration. To entitle him to an action the contract must have been made *for his benefit*. *He must be the person intended to be benefited, etc.*" In *Vrooman v. Turner*, 69 N. Y. 280, it was said by the court of appeals that, "to give a third party who may derive a benefit from the performance of the promise, an action, there must be, *first*, an intent by the promisee to secure some benefit to the third party, and, *second*, some privity between the two, the promisee and the party to be benefited, and some obligation or duty owing from the former to the latter which would give him a legal or equitable claim to the benefit of the promise, or an equivalent from him personally." See criticism in *Am. Law Rev.* Ap. 1881, 243; and see also *Campbell v. Smith*, 8 Hun, 6; 71 N. Y. 26.

"When two parties for a consideration sufficient as between themselves covenant to do some act, which, if done, would incidentally result to the benefit of a mere stranger, that stranger has not a right to enforce the covenant, though one of the contracting parties might enforce it against the other." *Danforth, J., Lake Ontario Shore R. R. v. Curtiss*, 80 N. Y. 223. And a person for whose benefit a promise is made cannot sue on a contract which cannot be enforced between the original parties.

"I know of no authority to support the proposition that a party not a party to the promise, but for whose benefit the promise is made, can maintain an action to enforce the promise, where the promise is void as between

the promisor and promisee, for fraud, or want of consideration, or failure of consideration." *Andrews, J., Dunning v. Leavitt*, 85 N. Y. 35.

"If one person make a promise to another for the benefit of a third person, such third person may maintain an action even at law upon it. *Joslin v. Car Co.*, 7 Vroom, 141. And, if a suit be brought in equity, the promisee is not a necessary party to it. *Pruder v. Williams*, 11 C. E. Green, 210;" *Runyon, Ch., Cubberly v. Cubberly*, 33 N. J. Eq. 86; S. P., 1 Pars. Cont. 389; *Barker v. Bucklin*, 2 Denio, 45; *Lawrence v. Fox*, 20 N. Y. 268; see *Marchington v. Vernon*, 1 B. & P. 101, note c.

In Pennsylvania it is said to be "a rudimental principle that a party may sue on a promise made on sufficient consideration for his use and benefit, though it be made to another and not to himself." *Paxson, J., Merriman v. Moore*, 90 Penn. St. 81, citing *Townsend v. Long*, 77 Penn. St. 143; *Justice v. Tallman*, 86 Penn. St. (5 Norris) 147. But that a stranger is not liable on a contract, see *Biery v. Ziegler*, 93 Penn. St. 367. In *Robertson v. Reed*, 47 Penn. St. 115, where the balance due a contractor was at his request placed to the credit of a third person, it was held that the latter could not maintain an action in his own name for the amount credited. And generally a promise by a debtor to his creditor to pay his debt to a third party will not sustain a suit by such third party against the debtor. *Blymire v. Boistle*, 6 Watts, 182; *Morrison v. Beckey*, 6 Watts, 849; *Torrens v. Campbell*, 74 Penn. St. 470.

In Indiana "it has been many times decided that a promise made by one to

on other grounds. We may take in illustration the line of cases where it is held that where by a contract between A. and B., B. receives money or goods in trust for C., C. can sue in his own name for the deposit.¹ When these cases, however, are scrutinized, it will be found that when B. did not act as the agent of C. (a condition to be presently more fully considered), there was a bargain more or less direct between A. and C.² The recognition, on such a state of facts, of C. as creditor of B. can be explained on the principles of novation, elsewhere discussed.³ If a creditor accepts a new party as a debtor in the place of an old debtor, the exchange of security may be regarded as a

Cases explicable on ground of novation, trust, or negligence.

another, from whom the consideration moves for the benefit of a third, may be sued on by the party for whose benefit the promise was made." Elliott, J., *Clodfelter v. Hulett*, 72 Ind. 141, citing *Raymond v. Pritchard*, 24 Ind. 318; *Josselyn v. Edwards*, 57 Ind. 212; *Campbell v. Patterson*, 58 Ind. 66; *Carter v. Zenblin*, 68 Ind. 436; *Fisher v. Wilmoth*, 68 Ind. 449; see *Loeb v. Weiss*, 64 Ind. 285.

"By repeated decisions of this court, the persons for whose benefit the promise is made may maintain actions in their own names to enforce such promise." Taylor, J., *Kollock v. Parcher*, 52 Wis. 400, citing *Putney v. Farnham*, 27 Wis. 187; *Bassett v. Hughes*, 43 Wis. 319.

"It is well established in this state that a party for whose benefit a stipulation in a simple contract is made may maintain a suit on such stipulation in his own name." Hough, J., *Fitzgerald v. Barker*, 70 Mo. 687. To same effect see *Beardslee v. Morgner*, 4 Mo. Ap. 139; *Raum v. Kaltwasser*, 4 Mo. Ap. 573.

"There is a conflict of the authorities in this country upon the subject, and the right was not recognized in the earlier decisions of this court; but it is

now settled in this state that a third person may maintain an action in his own name upon a contract, supported by a consideration, made in his favor, though not made with him. *Smith v. Lewis*, 3 B. Monr. 229; *Lucas v. Chamberlain*, 8 ib. 276; *Allen v. Thomas*, 3 Met. (Ky.) 198; *Story on Bailments*, § 103; 1 *Chitty on Plead.* 4. And he may sue upon such contract without a consideration passing from him to the promisor." Lewis, C. J., *Moody v. Wiley*, Sup. Ct. Ky. 1881.

¹ *Warren v. Batchelder*, 16 N. H. 580; *Perry v. Swazey*, 12 Cush. 36; *Mellen v. Whipple*, 1 Gray, 319; *Crocker v. Higgins*, 7 Conn. 342; *Delaware Canal Co. v. Bank*, 4 Denio, 97; *Barker v. Bradley*, 82 N. Y. 316; *Beers v. Robinson*, 9 Barr, 229; *Justice v. Tallman*, 86 Penn. St. 149; *Merriman v. Moore*, 90 Penn. St. 80; *Beardslee v. Morgner*, 4 Mo. Ap. 139; *Barbaro v. Occidental Grove*, 4 Mo. Ap. 429.

² *Dingeldein v. R. R.*, 37 N. Y. 575; *Johnson v. Knapp*, 36 Iowa, 616; *Beesley v. Webster*, 64 Ill. 488; *Snell v. Ives*, 85 Ill. 279; *McDowell v. Laer*, 35 Wis. 171; and cases cited *Wald's Pollock*, 199-200.

³ *Infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

sufficient consideration for the agreement of the new debtor to pay the debt.¹—Or it may be said that in some of the cases B. acts throughout as C.'s agent, and that in such cases it is proper that the suit should be brought in C.'s name.² Other cases may be explained on the ground of a fiduciary contractual relation between the plaintiff and the defendant. I receive money in trust for C., and the very moment C. says to me, "I hold you as my trustee, and will let the money remain in your hands until I call for it," this establishes a contractual relation, in which if my temporary use of the money is not a sufficient consideration, the confidence bestowed on me is. And this explanation is strengthened by the fact that when we get out of the line of trusts, of novations, and of negligence, the cases are rare in which the right of a party not a stranger to the contract to sue is recognized. Thus, in Illinois, where the laxer view is ostensibly held, it is ruled that only a party can sue on a forfeiture;³ and in Iowa, where the laxer view is also held, it is ruled that the owner of property destroyed by fire cannot maintain an action against a water company which has contracted to supply with water the city in which the property at the time of its destruction is situated.⁴ "One whom the law regards as a stranger to the contract cannot maintain an action thereon. The rule is founded on the plainest reasons. The contracting parties control all interests, and are entitled to all rights secured by the contract. If mere strangers may enforce the contract by action, on the ground of benefits flowing therefrom to them, there would be no certain limit to the number and character of actions which would be brought thereon."⁵—Another inde-

¹ See *supra*, § 505; *infra*, §§ 882 *et seq.* Some cases, however, cannot be thus explained. Thus, in an Indiana case, in 1880, the maker of a note sold certain real estate in consideration of the purchaser's agreement to pay all his, the vendor's, indebtedness. It was held that the payee might, without any privity on his own part, sue the purchaser on this agreement. *Carter v. Zenblin*, 68 Ind. 436; see *Fisher*

v. Wilmoth, 68 Ind. 449; and see *Johnson v. Knapp*, 36 Ind. 616. Cf. article in *Central Law Journal*, Aug. 27, 1880.

² See *infra*, § 794.

³ *Neimeyer v. Knight*, 98 Ill. 222.

⁴ *Davis v. Water Works Co.*, 54 Iowa, 61, citing *Atkinson v. Water Works*, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 441; *Nickerson v. Hydraulic Co.*, 46 Conn. 24.

⁵ *Beck, J.*, *Davis v. Water Works*, 54 Iowa, 61; *Wh. on Neg.* §§ 438-9-40.

pendent basis on which some of the cases before us may be placed, without invading the principle that none but parties to a contract can sue on it, is that of negligence. The rule is, *sic utere tuo ut non alienum laedas*; and if this rule is violated, it is no defence that the offending party did the wrongful act under the stress of a contract with a third party.¹ On this ground we may explain a remarkable case in New York, in 1881,² where it was held that where a contract was entered into between the state authorities of New York and certain publishers, to the effect that such publishers, in consideration of having given to them the publication of the reports, should be required to furnish other publishers on certain terms, an action would lie against such publishers by parties to whom they refused to sell the reports on specified terms. "The rule," said Miller, J., "is well settled by the decisions of the courts of this state, that an agreement made for a valid consideration by one party with another to pay money to a third, can be enforced by such third person in his own name. . . . Contractors with the state, who assume, for a consideration received from the sovereign power, by covenant, express or implied, to do certain things, are liable in case of neglect to perform such covenant, to a private action at the suit of the party injured by such neglect, and such contract enures to the benefit of the individual who is interested in its performance."³ Now this is unquestionable law; but it does not go to sustain the position that a person not a party to a contract can sue on it contractually. All that the argument of Mr. Justice Miller goes to show is that a suit for negligence lies by a party

It would be otherwise in an action on the tort. *Infra*, § 812.—The distinction in the text will sustain the ruling that a policy of insurance, by which certain property of A. is insured, for the benefit of B., B. being the mortgagee of the property, enables B. to sue as plaintiff to recover on the policy. *May on Insurance*, § 447; *Barrett v. Ins. Co.*, 7 Cush. 175. See *supra*, § 24; *infra*, §§ 800–1.

¹ See *infra*, §§ 812, 1043 *et seq.*; Wh. on Neg. §§ 435, 780 *et seq.*

² *Little v. Banks*, 85 N. Y. 258.

³ To this are cited *Weet v. Vil. of Brockport*, 16 N. Y. 161; *Robinson v. Chamberlain*, 34 N. Y. 389; *Fulton Ins. Co. v. Baldwin*, 37 N. Y. 648; *Johnson v. Belden*, 47 N. Y. 130; *Brooklyn v. R. R.*, 47 N. Y. 476; *McMahon v. R. R.*, 75 N. Y. 231; *Conroy v. Gale*, 5 Lans. 344; all of these being suits for negligence. To this effect see *Schlossmann, Vertrag*, 287.

injured irrespective of contractual relations, against the party inflicting the injury. Of the cases cited by him not one was on a contract; all are for negligence.

§ 786 a. On the principle of novation, also, may be explained the numerous cases in which the owner of mortgaged property sells it under an agreement with the vendee, by which the latter assumes the mortgage debt, and the mortgage creditor accepts the substitution. In such case the substituted debtor is liable to the creditor on the novation.¹ “Even a verbal promise by a purchaser to assume and pay a mortgage is valid, and may be enforced in equity not only by the grantor, but by the holder of the mortgage.”² Such a promise may be inferred from the terms of the document by which the purchaser takes title. “Where land is conveyed subject to a mortgage, the grantee does not undertake or become bound by a mere acceptance of the deed to pay the mortgage debt; but if the grantee takes a deed containing a recital that the land is subject to a mortgage which the grantee assumes, or agrees to pay, a duty is imposed on him by the acceptance, and the law implies a promise to perform it, on which promise, in case of failure, *assumpsit* will lie.”³ But a party acquiring an interest in the

¹ *Infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; *Halsey v. Reed*, 9 Paige, 446; *Burr v. Beers*, 24 N. Y. 178; *Dingeldein v. R. R.*, 37 N. Y. 575; *Ricard v. Sanderson*, 41 N. Y. 179; *Campbell v. Smith*, 71 N. Y. 26; *Calvo v. Davies*, 73 N. Y. 211; *Girard Ins. Co. v. Stewart*, 86 Penn. St. 89; *Merriman v. Moore*, 90 Penn. St. 78; *Thompson v. Thompson*, 4 Oh. St. 333; *Helms v. Kearns*, 40 Ind. 124; *Fowler v. Fay*, 62 Ill. 375; *Snell v. Ives*, 85 Ill. 279; *Ross v. Kennison*, 38 Iowa, 396; *Jordon v. White*, 20 Minn. 91; *Mason v. Hall*, 30 Ala. 599; *Meyer v. Lowell*, 44 Mo. 328; *Rogers v. Gosnell*, 58 Mo. 589; see, however, *contra*, *Mellen v. Whipple*, 1 Gray, 317; *Pettee v. Peppard*, 120 Mass. 522; *Prentice v. Brimhall*, 123 Mass. 291; *cf.* *Jones on Mortgages*, §§ 748 *et seq.*

² *Jones on Mortgages*, § 750; citing *Bolles v. Beach*, 2 Zab. N. J. 680; *Wilson v. King*, 23 N. J. Eq. 150; *Conover v. Brown*, 29 N. J. Eq. 510; and see to this effect, cases cited *infra*, § 809. That the agreement may be outside of the conveyance, see *Schmucker v. Sibert*, 18 Kans. 104. In New York, the cases are put on the ground that a third person may maintain a suit on a contract made for his benefit. *Thorp v. Coal Co.*, 48 N. Y. 253; *Lawrence v. Fox*, 20 N. Y. 268; *Campbell v. Smith*, 8 Hun, 6; 71 N. Y. 26.

³ *Hough, J.*, *Heim v. Vogle*, 69 Mo. 535; *Fitzgerald v. Barker*, 70 Mo. 685; see *Jones on Mort.* § 748; *Pike v. Brown*, 7 Cush. 133; *Braman v. Dowse*, 12 Cush. 227; *Jewett v. Draper*, 6 Allen, 434; *Furnas v. Durgin*, 119 Mass.

lands after making the promise, cannot sue as plaintiff;¹ and to entitle the third party to sue, there must be either a new consideration or a prior relationship such as would sustain the promise.² On the other hand, in Massachusetts and New Jersey, it is held that no action at law lies by the mortgagee against the purchaser on an implied promise by the latter that he will pay the mortgage.³ But where there is a contractual relation instituted between the mortgagee and the purchaser, the better view is, that the latter should be liable to the former in *assumpsit* for the mortgage debt. As a purchaser of mortgaged property, for instance, I admit my liability to the mortgagee. The concession of accepting me as a debtor is a sufficient consideration to bind me; the additional security he has in the investment is a sufficient consideration to bind him.⁴

§ 787. Putting aside, however, cases of novation and of trust, it needs only a glance at some of the more conspicuous agreements for the benefit of third parties to see that to allow third parties on principle to sue on all contracts for their benefit would not only be inconsistent with rational jurisprudence, but would impose an intolerable burden on business. If no restriction on this be applied, (1) any stranger might interfere in any suit;

Importance
of thus re-
stricting
right to
sue.

500; *Atlantic Dock Co. v. Leavitt*, 54 N. Y. 38; *Crawford v. Edwards*, 33 Mich. 354.

¹ *Miller v. Winchall*, 70 N. Y. 437.

² *Vrooman v. Turner*, 69 N. Y. 280; *Cushman v. Henry*, 5 How. N. Y. Pr. 234.

³ *Mellen v. Whipple*, 1 Gray, 317; *Pettee v. Peppard*, 120 Mass. 522; *Prentice v. Brimhall*, 123 Mass. 291; *Crowell v. Hospital*, 27 N. J. Eq. 650. In a Massachusetts case, in 1882, the holder of a mortgage, which had been foreclosed and the property sold at a price less than the mortgage debt, acquired the entire interest in the same property at the same price. It was held by the supreme court that he could not bring an action of contract to recover the balance due on the mort-

gage in the name of the mortgagor, against his grantee, who in the deed to him had assumed the payment of the mortgage against the mortgagor's consent. An action of law upon the stipulation in a deed poll, by which the grantee assumes and agrees to pay as his own debt a previous debt of the grantor, secured by mortgage of the granted premises, must be brought, so it was held, in the name of the grantor only. *Coffin v. Adams*, 131 Mass. 133.

⁴ *Supra*, § 505. A reconveyance from the substituted debtor to the original debtor, before the perfection of the novation, vacates the substituted debtor's liability to the original creditor. *Crowell v. Hospital*, 27 N. J. Eq. 650.

(2) innumerable warring claims might be brought together for the same thing. But this is not all. There are few banking associations that do not undertake to furnish currency for persons of a particular district; there are no charitable associations that do not undertake to raise funds for the benefit of certain designated classes; there are no literary or educational organizations that do not rest on a contract between the parties to supply books or instruction to specified classes; there is no subscription for religious or other purposes that does not have a similar object in view;¹ and if the principle here contested is true, in each of these cases a suit could be maintained by each of the parties to be benefited by the association in question against the persons so associating. No bargain can be conceived of, no matter how confidential, on which strangers could not bring suit; no duty, no matter how delicate, which strangers could not interfere to enforce. There could be no claim on which there could not be as many conflicting suits brought as there are persons interested no matter how remotely; and in the face of the fact that when A. tells B. to hold money for C., A. may revoke this direction at any time before payment to C., it could not be held that C., on such a cause of action, could maintain suit against B.—But the hardship in such cases does not stop with the defendant, who thus is exposed to liabilities he did not assume. The position of the plaintiff, if the view here contested be sound, is also entitled to grave consideration. It may be said that it is a very good thing for me, of which I have no right to complain, to find that somebody has been depositing \$1000 for me at a bank; and that I ought at once to be entitled to bring suit for the deposit. But it may be a very bad thing for me on which I may have serious ground for complaint, since as there is no contract without two parties, if I can sue the new debtor thus put upon me without my assent, he can sue me for failure of consideration or for money paid by mistake.² And aside from this, supposing the money to be a gift, gifts are not always necessarily disinterested. There may be many reasons why I may be unwilling to accept a gift from a person

¹ *Supra*, § 528.

² *Supra*, § 2.

to whom I may not desire to be under obligation. If the depositary, also, by this process becomes my debtor, I by the same reasoning become his creditor, and even supposing I give no pecuniary consideration for what I receive, I may be compromised seriously in some other way. Either there is, or there is not a contractual relation between me and a depositary with whom money is deposited for my benefit. If there is not, then there is no basis for the contention that C. can sue B. for money deposited by A. with B. for C. If there is, then I am contractually bound to every depositary with whom funds may be placed to my credit. The depositary may be a party open to grave exception. I may be credited with a share in some speculation in which my name may be supposed to be of use, and to which, thereby, my influence is pledged, or in some investment in which membership may involve serious future liability. Am I to be bound by such burdens simply because other parties, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, choose to present to me property on which these burdens are imposed?—It may be said, in reply, that although the parties making the provision are bound to me, I am not bound to them. But if they are bound to me, I am bound to them; if I am not bound to them, they are not bound to me.¹—It may also be objected that permitting an assignee of a debt to sue is open to the same criticism as permitting a stranger to sue; and that if there is a contractual relation between me and the assignee of the debt of my creditor, so there is a contractual relation between me and parties who undertake to make a contract for my benefit. But there is this fundamental difference, that in the first case I part with a portion of my liberty to my creditor knowing the law to be that he can assign his claim over me to a stranger; in the second case I do not part with my liberty at all.—It is also to be remembered that if A. and B. intend to establish a contractual relation with C., the proper way to exhibit that intention would be for them to see C., and to get him to join in the contract. That he is not appealed to, when it would be easy to obtain

¹ *Payne v. Cave*, 3 T. R. 148; *Cooke* 3 Man. & R. 97; *Martin v. Mitchell*, 2 v. Oxley, 3 T. R. 653; *Head v. Diggon*, Jac. & W. 413; *supra*, § 2.

his assent if really desired, affords a strong inference that the parties did not desire his assent.

§ 788. It is agreed on all sides that on a deed *inter partes* none but parties can sue. If the deed, in other words, on its face restricts its parties to "A. of the first part and B. of the second part," C. cannot sue thereon, even though the contract purport to have been made for his sole advantage, and contain an express covenant with him for his benefit.¹ An action on a policy of marine insurance, however, can be brought, either by the broker who negotiated it, provided he be the ostensible party, or by the party interested.² A bond, also, payable to B. or C. may be sued on by B.;³ and a party designated in a composition deed, as beneficially interested, there being a several covenant with him by the debtor, may sue on the deed.⁴

§ 789. On a deed poll, in which the promisee is not formally named as a party to the deed, but appears only as recited either specially or as one of a class in the body of the deed, the promisee, if complying with the conditions of the deed, or otherwise contributing a sufficient consideration, is entitled to bring suit.⁵ When a policy of insurance is issued as a deed poll, in which the insurers covenant to pay the loss insured against, without specifying the covenantee by name, all persons interested in the insurance and on behalf of whom it is made may sue on the covenant.⁶ But the party suing must in such cases sue sub-

¹ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 4; *Offy v. Ward*, 1 Lev. 235; *Bushell v. Beavan*, 1 Bing. N. C. 120; *Chesterfield Co. v. Hawkins*, 3 H. & C. 677; *Storer v. Gordon*, 3 M. & S. 308; *Barford v. Stuckey*, 2 B. & B. 333; *Berkeley v. Hardy*, 5 B. & C. 355; *Hinkley v. Fowler*, 15 Me. 285; *Sanders v. Filley*, 12 Pick. 554; *Northampton v. Elwell*, 4 Gray, 81; *Hornbeck v. Westbrook*, 9 Johns. 73; *Hornbeck v. Sleght*, 12 Johns. 199; *Spencer v. Field*, 10 Wend. 87; *Robbins v. Ayres*, 10 Mo. 538.

² *White v. Hancock*, 2 C. B. 830.

³ *Gresty v. Gibson*, L. R. 1 Ex. 112; *Reeves v. Watts*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 412; *Frost v. Gage*, 1 Allen, 262; cited Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 78; *Leake*, 2d ed. 445.

⁴ *Leake*, 2d ed. 143, 445; Ch. on Con. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 4; *Platt on Covenants*, 513; *Chaplain v. Canada*, 8 Conn. 286.

⁵ *Sunderland Ins. Co. v. Kearney*, 16 Q. B. 925.

ject to all the limitations expressed in the deed.¹ And a deed poll to C. for the benefit of D. cannot be sued on, at least according to the rule prevailing in Massachusetts and England, by D.²—As has been already seen, it has been held in several states, that acceptance of a deed poll containing a recital that the land conveyed is subject to a mortgage, which the grantee agrees to pay, imposes a duty on the grantee to pay the mortgage and raises an implied promise on which a suit can be maintained.³

§ 790. It was stated at the beginning of this chapter, that by the English common law, a person cannot bring suit on a contract to which he is not a party. An exception to this rule is recognized in favor of children born of a marriage subject to a marriage settlement. The children born of such a marriage may sue under such a settlement; nor is it any defence that they were not in existence at the time of the settlement.⁴ And as a general rule, peculiar favor is extended by courts of equity to provisions made by parents for their children.⁵

Exception to general rule as to provisions for children.

§ 791. Another supposed exception is recognition of the liability of telegraph companies to parties receiving messages erroneously addressed or erroneously transmitted. In England this liability is denied in cases where the telegraph company is not the agent of the receiver of the message.⁶ In this country there is a concur-

Exception as to receiver of telegrams.

¹ *Macdonald v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 9 Q. B. 328.

² *Sanders v. Filley*, 12 Pick. 554; *Johnson v. Foster*, 12 Met. 167; *Flynn v. Ins. Co.*, 115 Mass. 449.

³ *Heim v. Vogel*, 69 Mo. 529; and cases cited *supra*, § 786.

⁴ *Gale v. Gale*, L. R. 6 Ch. D. 144; *Pollock*, 3d ed. 216. But see *Ross v. Milne*, 12 Leigh, 204.

⁵ *Pollock*, 3d ed. 216; citing *Cotton*, L. J., 15 Ch. D. 242.

⁶ *Dickson v. Tel. Co.*, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 62; L. R. 3 C. P. D. 1; *S. P. Playford v. Tel. Co.*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 706. In *Dickson v. Tel. Co.* the plaintiffs, mer-

chants of Valparaiso, received a message erroneously delivered to them by the company's agent, the message not having been intended for them, and not coming from the parties from whom it purported to come. It was held that the plaintiffs owed the defendant no duty arising from contract. "It is impossible to suppose," said Cotton, L. J., "that the company, in the ordinary course of their business, warrant that the message comes from a particular person, for they would thereby make a representation the truth of which in many cases they cannot ascertain."

rence of opinion to the effect that a telegraph company is liable to the receiver of a message which it erroneously transmits.¹ In some of these cases² the liability is placed on the ground of agency. The company is supposed to say to the receiver, "Will you pay me for this message if correct?" or, "Will you rely on the correctness of this message, and so far give me your patronage?" and the answer is, "I will!" Now, however strong the argument for agency may be in cases in which the receiver pays for the message, it fails where there is no payment, and where the sole relationship consists in the company sending the message to the receiver. A more reliable basis for the suit is that which is supplied by an appeal to the responsibility of the company on the principle *sic utere tuo ut non alienum laedas*. Electricity is as powerful an agent, in some aspects, as steam. If a railroad company is required to reimburse a party injured by its negligent abuse of steam power, it is proper that a telegraph company should be held liable to a party injured by its negligent use of electricity.³ If I am injured by the falling down of a building negligently erected on the land of A., it would be no defence to a suit brought by me against A. that the building was in the course of erection in pursuance of a contract between A. and B. If an apothecary negligently hands me poison, in consequence of which I am injured, it is no defence that this poison was made up for perfectly legitimate purposes, in pursuance of a contract between the apothecary and D. And if a telegraph company hands me a message by which I am injured, the fact that this is incidental to a contract between the company and the sender should constitute no defence.—Another state of facts, however, arises when the plaintiff's

¹ *Elwood v. Tel. Co.*, 45 N. Y. 549; *Minn.* 155; *De La Grange v. Tel. Co.*, 25 La. An. 383; *Bank of Cal. v. Tel. Co.*, 52 Cal. 280. See 2 Thom. on Neg. 847-8; *Ellis v. Tel. Co.*, 13 Allen, 226.
² See *New York Tel. Co. v. Dryburg*, 35 Penn. St. 303; *De La Grange v. Tel. Co.*, 25 La. An. 383.
³ See Wh. on Neg. § 758; and see *infra*, § 812.

De Rutte v. Tel. Co., 1 Daly, 547; 30 How. Pr. 403; *Rose v. Tel. Co.*, 3 Abb. Pr. (N. S.) 409; 34 How. Pr. 308; *New York, etc. Tel. Co. v. Dryburg*, 35 Penn. St. 303; *Harris v. Tel. Co.*, 9 Phil. 88; *West. Un. Tel. Co. v. Fenton*, 52 Ind. 1; *Aiken v. Tel. Co.*, 5 So. Car. 368; *West. Un. Tel. v. Carey*, 15 Mich. 525; *Beaupré v. Tel. Co.*, 21

claim is the *non-delivery* of the message. In such case, unless this delivery be made obligatory by statute, the better opinion is that the only party who can sue for redress is the sender.¹

§ 792. Another apparent though not real exception is that of the consignee of goods, who, when beneficially interested, is entitled to sue the carrier. But, in point of fact, the cases in which this right is sustained are cases in which the consignee is the purchaser of the goods, and in which the consignor, in making the contract of carriage, does so as the consignee's agent.² Hence, "where there is no express agreement, the person at whose risk goods are carried is entitled to sue the carrier for their non-delivery. This person is generally the consignee, but may be the consignor."³ And, unless there is something to prove the contrary, the mere fact of delivery to the carrier of goods with the consignee's address indicates property in the consignee.⁴ But suit must be brought in the consignor's name when the property remains in him, as when the transfer is only on trial, or is void by the statute of frauds;⁵ and so when by an agreement between the parties no property is to vest in the consignee until delivery.⁶ And, in the absence of proof

Exception
as to con-
signee of
goods.

¹ See Wh. on Neg. §§ 439-41, 757; *infra*, § 812; *True v. Tel. Co.*, 60 Me. 9; *Parks v. Tel. Co.*, 13 Cal. 422. *Aliter* if delivery be a statutory duty; *West. Un. Tel. Co. v. Fenton*, 52 Ind. 1. In an ingenious article in the *American Law Review* for April, 1881, the American rulings are explained on the ground that the telegraph company contracts *with the sender for the benefit of the receiver*, as the latter's interest shall appear, to transmit the message, using due care, and, in case of negligence and damages resulting therefrom, to compensate the receiver if it is to him that the damages result. But to harmonize this position with the English and Massachusetts rulings it is necessary to view the sender as the receiver's agent in making the contract.

² See Dicey on Part. 87; Ch. on Pl.

16th Am. ed. (1879) 6; *Dutton v. Solomonson*, 3 B. & P. 584; *Dawes v. Peck*, 8 T. R. 330; *Lawrence v. Minturn*, 17 How. U. S. 100; *Arbuckle v. Thompson*, 37 Penn. St. 170.

³ Dicey, *ut supra*, 89.

⁴ *Abbott on Ship*. 11th Eng. ed. 283; *Angell on Carriers*, § 495; *Chandler v. Sprague*, 5 Metc. 306; *Ludlow v. Bown*, 1 Johns. 1; *Potter v. Lansing*, 1 Johns. 215; *Griffith v. Ingleton*, 6 S. R. 429.

⁵ *Chit. on Pl.* 16th Am. ed. 6; *Freeman v. Birch*, 1 Nev. & M. 420; *Duff v. Budd*, 3 B. & B. 183; *Norman v. Phillips*, 14 M. & W. 277; *Price v. Powell*, 3 Comst. 322.

⁶ *Stephenson v. Hart*, 4 Bing. 476; *Isley v. Stubbs*, 9 Mass. 65; *Blanchard v. Page*, 8 Gray, 281.

of property in the consignee, the consignor may maintain an action for the loss of the goods;¹ and so may any party having an interest in the goods.²

§ 793. A bill of lading is (1) a receipt from a carrier for goods to be delivered to a consignee or his assigns,³ and (2) a contract for the delivery of the goods as thus directed.⁴ In shipping contracts "three copies are made, each signed by the master—one is kept by the consignor of the goods, one by the master of the ship, and one is forwarded to X., the consignee, who on receipt of it acquires a property in the goods which can only be defeated by the exercise of the vendor's equitable right of stoppage *in transitu*. The assignment of the bill of lading by endorsement by the consignee to a holder for value gives to that holder a better right than the consignee himself possessed. He has a title to the goods which overrides the vendor's right of stoppage *in transitu*, and gives him a claim to them in spite of the insolvency of the consignee and the consequent loss of the price of his goods by the consignor."— . . . The assignment of a bill of lading "transfers rights *in rem*, rights to specific goods, and these, to a certain extent, wider than those possessed by the assignor; therein it differs from negotiable instruments which only confer rights *in personam*." "But though the assignee is relieved from one of the liabilities of the assignor, he does not acquire proprietary rights independently of his assignor's title; a bill of lading stolen or transferred without the authority of the person really entitled, gives no rights even to a *bona fide* endorsee.⁵ And, again, the contractual rights conferred by statute are expressly conferred subject to

¹ Hand v. Baynes, 4 Whart. 204.

² Philadelphia Steamboat Co. v. Atkins, 22 Penn. St. 522; Hulse v. Young, 16 Johns. 1.

³ See Lickbarrow v. Mason, 2 T. R. 63; Berkeley v. Watling, 7 A. & E. 39; Ryberg v. Snell, 2 Wash. C. C. 294; Saltus v. Everett, 20 Wend. 268; Lawrence v. Minturn, 17 How. U. S. 100; Sanderson v. Lamberton, 6 Binn. 129.

⁴ Blanchet v. Collieries Co., L. R. 9

Ex. 74; O'Brien v. Gilchrist, 34 Me. 554; Shepherd v. Naylor, 5 Gray, 591; Relyea v. New Haven Co., 42 Conn. 579; Meyer v. Peck, 33 Barb. 532; McMillan v. R. R., 16 Mich. 79; Ezell v. English, 6 Port. 311; Wayland v. Mosley, 5 Ala., 430; Bonner v. Marsh, 10 S. M. & M. 376. As to distinction between negotiability and assignability, see *infra*, § 838.

⁵ Gurney v. Behrend, 3 E. & B. 622.

equities. A bill of lading, then, may be called a contract assignable without notice, partaking in some respects of the character of conveyance, inasmuch as it gives a title to property, but incapable of giving a better title, whether proprietary or contractual, than is possessed by the assignor, subject always to this exception, that one who takes from an assignor with a good title is relieved from liability to the vendor's right of stoppage *in transitu* which might have been exercised against the original consignee."¹ The transferee, therefore, who has made advances, and who takes from the designated owner, is beneficially interested in the goods, whether there be a special endorsement to him or not.² At common law he cannot in his own name sue the carrier, but must use the name of his assignor;³ but by statute in England, as we have seen, and in most jurisdictions in this country, bills of lading are made negotiable.⁴—It should be remembered that at common law the two offices of a bill of lading (*i. e.* the title it gives to the property as against the assignor, it being in this respect a sale, and the right of action it gives as against the carrier) are to be distinguished; and hence, unless there be an enabling statute, the assignee or endorsee should sue in the name of the party under whom he takes, and with whom the contract was executed.⁵—When a bill of lading is attached to a draft as a

¹ Anson, 217-8; Lickbarrow *v.* Mason, 2 T. R. 63; 6 East, 21 n; Jenkyns *v.* Osborne, 7 M. & G. 678; Leask *v.* Scott, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 376; Glynn *v.* East India Dock Co., L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 129; Walter *v.* Ross, 2 Wash. C. C. 283; Allen *v.* Williams, 12 Pick. 297; Alderman *v.* R. R., 115 Mass. 233; Rawls *v.* Deshler, 3 Keyes, 572; Marine Bk. *v.* Wright, 48 N. Y. 1; Holmes *v.* Bank, 87 Penn. St. 525; Mich. Cent. R. R. *v.* Phillips, 60 Ill. 190; Law *v.* Hatcher, 4 Blackf. 364; Valle *v.* Cerre, 36 Mo. 575.

² Robinson *v.* Stuart, 68 Me. 61; Newcomb *v.* R. R., 115 Mass. 230; Hathaway *v.* Haynes, 124 Mass. 311; Emery *v.* Bank, 25 Oh. St. 360; Merchant's Bk. *v.* Hewitt, 3 Iowa, 103.

³ Thompson *v.* Dominy, 14 M. & W. 403; Howard *v.* Shepherd, 9 C. B. 297; Blanchard *v.* Page, 8 Gray, 297; Stollenwerck *v.* Thacher, 115 Mass. 224; Lineker *v.* Aylesford, 1 Cal. 75.

⁴ See Short *v.* Simpson, L. R. 1 C. P. 248; Shaw *v.* R. R., 101 U. S. 557; Merchant's Bank *v.* R. R., 69 N. Y. 393.

⁵ Ibid.; Rowley *v.* Bigelow, 12 Pick. 314. That delivery without endorsement does not pass property in goods, see Stone *v.* Swift, 4 Pick. 389. That the consignor named in a bill of lading, though without property in the goods, can sue the carrier for injury to them, see Sargent *v.* Morris, 3 B. & Ald. 277; Blanchard *v.* Page, 8 Gray, 281.

security for its payment, it is an appropriation to the payee of the property described in the bill of lading, whether the latter be endorsed or not.¹—The unauthorized and surreptitious delivery of a bill of lading of goods which have never been in the carrier's possession, does not bind the carrier even to a *bona fide* holder.² And a transfer by one without any title to the goods passes no right to them to the transferee, even though he be a purchaser for value without notice.³

§ 794. A supposed exception, also, has been made in suits for money had and received, in which "it is not a rule of universal application that it is necessary to show privity in order to maintain an action."⁴ But actions of this class, when within the range of this exception, though nominally based on contract, are virtually equitable procedures for the execution of a trust. Hence, if money be remitted by A. to B. to pay C., and B. in any way, either expressly or by implication, acknowledges his indebtedness to C., he may be sued by C. in this form of action, a contractual relation being established between B. and C. And even though we reject this view, as might be the case in those states where the line between law and equity is still strictly maintained, yet the cases before us may still be explained, on common law principles, on the ground of agency. The defendant, when he receives money as the plaintiff's agent, is bound to account.⁵ But where A. pays money to B. for C.'s use, a suit to recover this money must be brought by B., unless (1) B. was agent for C., in which case C. can sue as principal, or (2) B. has undertaken with C. to hold the money for C.⁶

¹ *Holmes v. Bailey*, 92 Penn. St. 57; *Holmes v. German Bank*, 87 Penn. St. 525; *infra*, § 837.

² *Gurney v. Behrend*, 3 E. & B. 622; *Robinson v. R. R.*, 9 Fed. Rep. 129; *Stollenwerck v. Thacher*, 115 Mass. 224.

³ *Thompson v. Dominy*, 14 M. & W. 403; *Pease v. Gloahec*, L. R. 1 P. C. 219; *Coventry v. Gladstone*, L. R. 6 Eq. 44; *Shaw v. R. R.*, 101 U. S. 567; *Stollenwerck v. Thacher*, 115 Mass. 224; *Dows v. Cobb*, 12 Barb. 310; *Barnard*

v. Campbell, 55 N. Y. 462; *Farmers' Bk. v. R. R.*, 72 N. Y. 188, and other cases in Cent. L. J. Jan. 13, 1882,

where the authorities are carefully examined. See *supra*, §§ 182, 292, 734.

⁴ *Collins v. Brook*, 5 H. & N. 706.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 722 *et seq.*, 786; *Lilly v. Hays*, 5 A. & E. 548; *Hall v. Marston*, 17 Mass. 575; *Mellen v. Whipple*, 1 Gray, 322; *Exchange Bank v. Rice*, 107 Mass. 41.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 728, 786; *Dicey, ut supra*, 93.

“If a debtor, by an order given to his agent, appropriates a fund in his hands to the discharge of the debt, and the agent pledges himself to the creditor so to appropriate the fund, the order is irrevocable, and the creditor may sue such agent.

. . . But the creditor cannot sue the agent unless the latter has assented to the appropriation so as to pledge himself to the creditor; for otherwise the debtor may countermand the order, and there is no privity between the creditor and the agent.”¹ Supposing the creditor accepts the substitution, this amounts to novation,² and the consideration is not merely the advantage to the creditor from the substitution of a new debtor (as Mr. Dicey seems to think), but the relief of the original debtor. “I will relieve the original debtor if you will take his place.”³—Supposing, also, money is sent to D. by B. a debtor of A., with instructions to D. to send the money to A., and D. advises A. to this effect and promises to pay A., this establishes a contractual relation between A. and D.; in other words, in such a case the original creditor may sue the depositary of the money on his promise to pay it over.⁴ And when money is deposited by a debtor with his agent to be paid to the creditor, of which the creditor is advised, it may be now considered settled that the creditor can sue the agent.⁵—Under the same form of action, the party equitably privileged may sue for money which the defendant has improperly received. “Where money has got into the hands of a party by means of some tortious act, this action will lie at the instance of the real owner of the money.”⁶ This includes cases in which the defendant has in his hands money which in equity belongs to the plaintiff, but which is wrongfully withheld.

¹ *Forth v. Stanton*, 1 Wms. Saund. 210 b, note (a); and see *Howell v. Batt*, 5 B. & Ad. 506, and for other cases see *supra*, § 728.

² *Infra*, § 852.

³ Dicey, *ut supra*, 94. See *Williams v. Everett*, 14 East, 582, for a case in which the party receiving the money was held not to hold it in trust for a party designated as beneficiary. That assent on the part of A. to hold money

for B.'s use gives B. a right of action, see *Lilly v. Hays*, 5 A. & E. 548.

⁴ *Lilly v. Hays*, 5 A. & E. 548; *Ephraïms v. Murdock*, 7 Blackf. 10; *infra*, § 852; and see criticism, *supra*, § 786.

⁵ Wh. on Agency, §§ 443, 541; *Halk v. Marston*, 17 Mass. 575; *Frost v. Gage*, 1 Allen, 262; *Dow v. Clark*, 7 Gray, 198; see *supra*, § 786.

⁶ *Crompton, J., Collins v. Brook*, 5. H. & N. 706.

In such cases, "the law creates the privity and implies the promise."¹—But apart from such cases of tortious withholding, in cases in which the "promisee is in fact acting as the agent of a third person, although that is unknown to the promisor, the principal is the real party to the contract, and may therefore sue in his own name, on the promise made to his agent."²

§ 795. Negotiable paper, also, establishes a liability from the party bound to the holder, although the latter acquired no title until long after the former became bound.³ The engagement of the party so bound is "I will pay the amount to whomsoever may happen to hold the paper on its maturity."⁴ A cheque, also, with a blank left for the payee's name, which the holder is entitled to fill in, binds the maker to whomsoever may be thus designated, though unknown to the maker at the time the check was drawn.⁵ A bill of exchange, also, though incomplete from the want of a payee, becomes operative as soon as the name of the payee is supplied, though this is not until after it is signed and put in circulation by the drawer.⁶ And, as a general rule, the signing and delivering of negotiable paper imparts authority to the party to whom it is given to fill up its blanks.⁷ But negotiable paper must have a certain payee, either named on its face, or to be hereafter individuated by the fact that he becomes the holder or "bearer" of the paper. If the payee (in cases where designation is attempted) be named in the alternative,⁸ or be named

Negotiable
paper es-
tablishes
liability to
holder
though un-
known at
the time of
making.

¹ Morton, J., *Putnam v. Field*, 103 Mass. 557; Bigelow, J., *Brewer v. Dyer*, 7 Cush. 340; Goodenow, J., *Stimson v. Ins. Co.*, 47 Me. 385; and see *supra*, §§ 724 *et seq.*

² Gray, C. J., in *Exchange Bank v. Rice*, 107 Mass. 43; citing *Sims v. Bond*, 5 B. & Ad. 389; 2 Nev. & M. 608; *Huntington v. Knox*, 7 Cush. 371; *Barry v. Page*, 10 Gray, 398.

³ As to distinction between assignability and negotiability, see *infra*, § 838.

⁴ See *Willans v. Ayers*, L. R. 3 Ap. Ca. 133; *Brown v. De Winton*, 6 C. B. 336; *Brandao v. Barnett*, 12 Cl. & F.

787; *Swift v. Tyson*, 16 Pet. 1; *Goodman v. Simonds*, 20 How. 343; *Hotchkiss v. Banks*, 21 Wall. 354; *Smith v. Livingston*, 111 Mass. 342; *Dutchess Co. Ins. Co. v. Hackett*, 73 N. Y. 226. See *supra*, § 24.

⁵ Byles on Bills, 9th ed. 3, 146; *Rouquette v. Obermann*, L. R. 10 Q. B. 525.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 437; *McCall v. Taylor*, 19 C. B. N. S. 301; *Stoessiger v. R. R.*, 3 E. & B. 549.

⁷ Byles on Bills, 9th ed. 84, 181; *Russel v. Langstaffe*, Dougl. 514; *Hayward ex parte*, L. R. 6 Ch. 546.

⁸ *Storm v. Stirling*, 3 E. & B. 832.

so ambiguously as to make him incapable of positive identification,¹ the paper cannot be sustained.² If the alleged maker's name is forged, then, no matter how honest may have been the purchase by the holder, he cannot recover.³—The holder of non-negotiable paper cannot sue the endorsers in his own name.⁴

§ 796. Even though a security be not on its face negotiable, a party who sells it for value cannot set up secret equities against a *bona fide* holder. And a party who entrusts such a document for sale to a broker without notice is estopped from setting up his title against parties taking such security in good faith and for value from the broker.⁵

Party may be estopped from denying liability.

§ 797. It will be hereafter considered how far parties issuing bonds may contract that they shall be free from equities.⁶ Whether there is such an intention is to be determined, under the applicatory law, by the document itself, aided, as to latent ambiguities, by extrinsic proof.⁷ In this country, bonds issued by corporations are regarded as transferable free from equities;⁸ and the purchaser for value, without notice, of a coupon bond, payable to bearer, may sue on it in his own name unaffected by the equities of prior holders.⁹—As negotiable instruments are regarded in England, scrip issued provisionally by the agents of a foreign government, preliminary to the issue of bonds;¹⁰ and “such bonds or scrip, and other foreign instru-

Whether bonds are negotiable depends upon terms of document.

¹ Cowie v. Stirling, 6 E. & B. 333.

² See Yates v. Nash, 8 C. R. N. S. 851; Leake, 2d ed. 437.

³ Pollock, 3d ed. 236; Robbett v. Pinkett, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 368; Carpenter v. Bank, 123 Mass. 66; Colson v. Arnot, 57 N. Y. 253; Buckley v. Bank, 35 N. J. L. 400; see *supra*, § 744.

⁴ Bircleback v. Wilkins, 22 Penn. St. 26; see *infra*, § 841.

⁵ *Infra*, § 846; Goodwin v. Robarts, L. R. 1 Ap. Ca. 486; South Ottawa v. Perkins, 94 U. S. 260; Cowdrey v. Vanbenburgh, 101 U. S. 572; Jarvis v. Rogers, 13 Mass. 105; Society for Savings v. New London, 29 Conn. 174; McNeill v. Bank, 46 N. Y. 325; Mer-

chants' Bank v. Livingston, 74 N. Y. 223; Combs v. Chandler, 33 Oh. St. 178. See Wh. on Ev. § 1147; Bigelow on Est. 452-67; and as to corporations see *supra*, § 141.

⁶ *Infra*, § 846.

⁷ *Infra*, § 843.

⁸ See *supra*, §§ 138 et seq.; *infra*, § 846; Mercer Co. v. Hacket, 1 Wall. 83; see Green's Brice's Ultra Vires, 268.

⁹ Fox v. Iron Co., 17 Leg. Int. 149. Coupons payable to bearer may be sued on by the holder separately from the bonds. Beaver Co. v. Armstrong, 44 Penn. St. 63.

¹⁰ Goodwin v. Robarts, L. R. 10 Ex. 76; aff. in Ex. Ch. L. R. 10 Ex. 33;

ments negotiable by the law of the country where they are made, may be recognized as negotiable by our courts, though they do not satisfy all the conditions of an English negotiable instrument."¹ The law of the place of payment, in such cases, determines the forms of demand and protest.²—Irrespective of the question of negotiability, the assignee of a bond is in most states entitled to bring suit on it in his own name. This, however, does not involve negotiability so as to free the holder from equities attaching prior to notice of the assignment.³ But to entitle the assignee of a railroad bond, payable to W. F., or assigns, to sue on such bond, he must prove endorsement or assignment in writing to him from W. F.⁴ "No doubt," said the court, "this bond was assignable in law so as to authorize the assignee to sue in his own name under the provisions of the act of May 28th, 1715, and it is conceded that it might have been assigned in equity by a parol delivery, but then the action must be in the name of the obligee."⁵ Railroad bonds payable to bearer, however, may be sued on by the holder.⁶—Mint certificates, though they may be assignable, are not regarded as negotiable,⁷ nor are certificates of deposits in savings funds.⁸ The form of assignments, as a rule, is to be determined by the *lex fori*.⁹

§ 797 a. Another exception is to be found in the case where a contract is made with the intention of injuriously affecting a third party. When this is done, such third party, if injured, may obtain redress from the wrong-doer.¹⁰ This, however, is not by a contractual suit, but by a suit for tort.

Exception
as to party
on whom
wrong is
inflicted.

in House of Lords, L. R. 1 Ap. Ca. 476.

¹ Pollock, 3d ed. 238, citing Crouch v. Credit Foncier, L. R. 8 Q. B. pp. 384-5; Goodwin v. Roberts, L. R. 1 Ap. Ca. 476; see *infra*, § 846.

² Wh. Con. of Laws, § 454; Rothschild v. Currie, 1 Q. B. 45; Horne v. Rouquette, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 514; Cox v. Nat. Bank, 100 U. S. 704.

³ Franks v. Brown, 17 S. & R. 290;

Hodgdon v. Naglee, 5 W. & S. 217; Lightly v. Brenner, 14 S. & R. 127.

⁴ Bunting v. R. R., 81 Penn. St. 254. See *infra*, § 841.

⁵ Licey v. Licey, 7 Barr, 251.

⁶ Carr v. Le Fevre, 27 Penn. St. 413.

⁷ Hegeman v. McCall, 1 Phila. 531.

⁸ London Saving Fund v. Bank, 36 Penn. St. 498.

⁹ *Infra*, § 841.

¹⁰ See *supra*, § 237.

§ 798. It has already been noticed that many of the cases in which persons who were at one time strangers to a contract are held entitled to sue on such contract are to be explained on the ground of a novation by which such persons become parties to the contract.

Novation
requires
creditor's
assent.

To constitute such novation it is essential (1) that the creditor should assent, on a sufficient consideration, to accept the new debtor, and (2) that the new debtor should assent, on a sufficient consideration, to be bound.¹

§ 799. A *cestui que trust*, no matter how exclusively the beneficial enjoyment of a contract is vested in him, cannot sue on it unless he is a party to the contract either in name or through an agent. If he could, it could be only on assumption of a contractual relation, which, were it recognized on principle, would enable any two persons to put a third on business relations with them whether he would or not.² But while a *cestui que trust* cannot, without becoming a party to a contract, sue on it, he may compel his trustee to sue; or may, in a court having equitable jurisdiction, use the trustee's name for the purpose of bringing suit.³ "This rule could not be disregarded without destroying the fundamental distinction between courts of law and courts of equity with regard to the remedy peculiar to each jurisdiction; if the *cestui que trust* were permitted to sue at law in his own name, the benefits intended to result from the intervention of a trustee clothed with a legal title might be lost, and the advantages arising from giving courts of equity exclusive control over matters of trust would be defeated."⁴—When the suit is brought in the trustee's name, a third party cannot set up against it the title of the *cestui que trust*.⁵

Cestui que
trust can-
not sue
unless
party.

¹ See *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; and see Conquest's case, L. R. 1 Ch. D. 334.

² *Supra*, § 787; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 2; *How v. How*, 1 N. H. 49; *Montague v. Smith*, 13 Mass. 404; *Treat v. Stanton*, 14 Conn. 445.

³ *Piercy ex parte*, L. R. 9 Ch. 43; *Pigott v. Thompson*, 3 B. & P. 147; *Berry v. Gillis*, 17 N. H. 9. That in

equity a trustee must join party having beneficial interest, see *Dunn v. Seymour*, 11 N. J. Eq. 220; and that the party beneficially interested may sue in his own name, see *Burlew v. Hillman*, 16 N. J. Eq. 23.

⁴ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 3; see *Barndollar v. Tate*, 1 S. & R. 160.

⁵ *Huston v. Wickerham*, 8 Watts,

§ 800. A contract implies the consent of two parties,¹ but it does not follow that both parties should be known at the time of the proposal to each other. One may be indeterminate at the time the proposal is made, and the proposal may remain open, so far as the promisee is concerned, until the contingency happens by which he is individuated. The proposal in such case establishes a contractual relation with all who take action in submission to its terms.² Hence a written promise by a colliery agent, addressed to whomsoever should apply, to load a ship on specific terms, binds the promisor to a master of a ship who chartered the ship on the faith of the promise.³ Under the same head may be mentioned railroad time-tables which bind the companies to parties taking action under such time-tables.⁴

§ 801. As additional illustrations of this rule may be noticed offers of rewards, by which persons desiring to have certain services rendered offer a specific sum to those persons who should render such services. Who the persons in question will be is not known by the promisor at the time of making the promise.⁵ A letter of credit, also, binds the party issuing it to all bankers who may advance money on the faith of it. The holder of the letter takes it to any bankers whom he may select, provided he be not limited in the letter, and the bankers who advance money on the faith of the letter become the promisees under the letter. When the proposal is taken up by a banker acting on the letter, then the contract is complete.⁶ The same distinction is applicable to offers of sale at auction. The *proposal* is made when the article is put up for sale. The *acceptance* is

519; *McHenry v. McCall*, 10 Watts, 456; “the original parties to a contract must be persons ascertained at the time when the contract is made.”
Lair v. Hunsicker, 28 Penn. St. 115.

¹ *Supra*, § 2.

² *Supra*, § 24; *Leake*, 2d ed. 436; This is to be taken subject to the qualification in the text. “The contract is not made” until the acceptance.
Tooley v. Comstock, 45 Mich. 603; *supra*, § 786.

³ *Weidner v. Hoggett*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 533. *Windscheid*, ii. § 309.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 24–26.

⁴ *Supra*, § 25. Mr. Pollock, 3d ed. 204, lays it down categorically that *ex parte*, L. R. 2 Ch. 391.

⁵ *Supra*, § 25 a; *Asiatic Banking Co.*

when the hammer falls; and at this moment the contract is complete.¹ But that there is no contract until there is an acceptance by a definite person is illustrated by other recent rulings. In one case it was held that the mere fact that an auctioneer in good faith advertises a sale of certain goods, does not bind him to parties attending the sale that the sale shall actually take place.² In another case it was held that the offer of stock in trade by tender does not amount to a contract to sell the stock to the person making the highest tender.³ Yet we can readily conceive of cases in which the auctioneer might create a binding contract by a general proposal. Suppose he should say, "if you put up a deposit," or "if you will give up another purchase you have in view," then the handing in the deposit, or the giving up the other purchase, would be a consideration which would bind the vendor.⁴

§ 802. A principal, whose existence as such was not known to the other party at the time of making the contract, can sue on the contract, and this apparently militates against the rule above stated that privity of contract is necessary to enable a party to maintain suit. But it must be remembered that the rule is, not that the plaintiff and the defendant should have contracted with each other personally, but that the plaintiff should come within the range of parties to whom the defendant agreed to perform certain services. If I deal with A., I may be readily understood to deal, under certain limitations, with the parties whom A. represents. The limitations are that any equities I may have, in the way of set-off or counter-claim, against A., I am to have against the principal whom A. represented, supposing that when I dealt with A. I believed I was dealing with a principal.⁵

Principal,
though un-
disclosed,
can sue.

¹ *Supra*, § 25 b.

² *Harris v. Nickerson*, L. R. 8 Q. B. 286.

³ *Spencer v. Harding*, L. R. 5 C. P. 561.

⁴ This would explain *Denton v. R.* R., 5 E. & B. 860, more satisfactorily than it is explained by Mr. Pollock (3d ed. 14). A railroad company is not

liable to me on its time-table simply because I say "I will take your offer." If, however, by relying on the time-table, I suffer some detriment, then the company is liable.

⁵ Wh. on Ag. §§ 405, 466, 722-741. As to set-offs, see *infra*, §§ 1021, 1023. That undisclosed principal may be sued, see *infra*, §§ 810, 810 a.

§ 803. It is competent to explain by parol evidence a latent ambiguity as to a name, as where a name is misspelt, or where one name is inserted when another is meant, or where for business purposes a name other than that of the actual party is used.¹ Thus, where a deed was made with the "City Investment Company," it was held admissible to show that this company consisted of two persons, who were entitled to sue on the deed.² It is also admissible to introduce evidence to identify grantee or assignee,³ and to prove who is the buyer and who the seller in a memorandum or note under the 17th section of the statute of frauds.⁴

§ 804. When a deed is executed for the benefit of certain persons, who are designated by the title of some office or relationship they hold and not by their real names, and when those persons do or suffer something in return which forms a sufficient consideration, parol evidence is admissible to identify them, and they are entitled to sue in their own names.⁵ This has been held to be the rule in cases where parties are described as "executors" of another, all the executors being entitled to join as parties,⁶ and where they are described as "creditors," coming in and proving their debts as such.⁷ Where, also, a contract of sale describes the vendors as "proprietors," they may be identified and may sue in their own names;⁸ and so where they are described as

¹ *Supra*, § 202; *Spurr v. Cass*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 656; *Kell v. Nainby*, 10 B. & C. 20; *Moller v. Lambert*, 2 Camp. 548; *Lancey v. Ins. Co.*, 56 Me. 562; *Foster v. McGraw*, 64 Penn. St. 464; *Richmond R. R. v. Snead*, 19 Grat. 354; *Nixon v. Cobleigh*, 52 Ill. 387; *Scammon v. Campbell*, 75 Ill. 223; *Bancroft v. Grover*, 23 Wis. 463; *Ellis v. Crawford*, 39 Cal. 523; and cases cited *supra*, § 202, where other distinctions are noticed.

² *Maugham v. Sharpe*, 17 C. B. N. S. 443.

³ *Langlois v. Crawford*, 59 Mo. 456; see *supra*, § 202.

⁴ *Wh. on Ag. §§ 719 et seq.; supra*, § 202; *Newell v. Radford*, L. R. 3 C. P. 52. That a party is bound by a contract he executes under an assumed name, see further *Richardson's case*, L. R. 19 Eq. 588; *Gould v. Barnes*, 3 Taunt. 504.

⁵ *Supra*, § 202.

⁶ *Hood v. Barrington*, L. R. 6 Eq. 218; *McClean v. Kennard*, L. R. 9 Ch. 336.

⁷ *Gresty v. Gibson*, 4 H. & C. 28; *Reeves v. Watts*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 412.

⁸ *Supra*, § 202; *Sale v. Lambert*, L. R. 18 Eq. 1; *Commings v. Scott*, L. R. 20 Eq. 11.

“trustees under a trust for sale.”¹—A mere description as “vendors” is not by itself sufficient for identification.²

§ 805. Since it is necessary to constitute a contract that there should be two parties, an engagement by which a party undertakes with himself to do a particular thing cannot be called a contract.³ There cannot, therefore, be a freight contract, in the proper sense of the term, when a ship owner carries his own goods in his ship.⁴ Where an insurance company, also, had two departments, one for insurance technically and the other for the granting of annuities, it was held that one department could not insure the other, and that such an insurance was void.⁵ A party, also, buying a judgment against himself extinguishes the judgment, and a mortgagee purchasing the equity of redemption extinguishes the mortgage.⁶

Party cannot contract with himself.

§ 806. The fact that other parties are joined in a joint indebtedness makes no difference, if striking out such other parties, the plaintiff would be virtually suing himself. The debtors are liable jointly, and extinguishing the debt as to one extinguishes it as to all.⁷ Hence it has been held that a note payable to the order of several persons, and endorsed by them to one of their number, was defectively endorsed, “for it is impossible for a person to sue himself, whether alone or jointly with others.”⁸ It is otherwise, however, when a note is made by several persons jointly and *severally*. In such case “it is no answer to an action upon the several liability of one that the payee was one of the joint makers.”

Joining other parties makes no difference.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 487, citing *Catling v. King*, 46 L. J. C. 384.

Burrows, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 163, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 636.

² *Potter v. Duffield*, L. R. 18 Eq. 4.

³ *Grey v. Ellison*, 1 Giff. 838.

⁴ *Miller v. Woodfall*, 8 E. & B. 493; *Gumm v. Tyrie*, 4 B. & S. 680; *Faulkner v. Lowe*, 2 Ex. 595. That one party cannot sign as the other party's agent, see *Sharman v. Brandt*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 720.

⁵ *Toulmin v. Steere*, 3 Mer. 210; see *Higgen's case*, 6 Co. 44b; *King v. Hoare*, 13 M. & W. 504.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 439; *Moffat v. Van Millingen*, 2 B. & P. 124 n.; *De Tastet v. Shaw*, 1 B. & Ald. 664.

⁷ Leake, 2d ed. 438; *Gumm v. Tyrie*, 4 B. & S. 680; *Mercantile Bk. v. Gladstone*, L. R. 3 Ex. 233; see *Keith v.*

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 439; citing *Mainwaring v. Newman*, 2 B. & P. 120.

⁹ Leake, 2d ed. 440, citing *Beecham*

§ 807. Although in equity a partner can call upon his co-partners to account, he cannot at law sue the partnership;¹ the principle being that there can be no contract between a party and himself jointly with others.² Nor can there be, at law, a contract between two partnerships which have a member common to both.³—Where, after a marriage, the fathers of the husband and wife agreed to pay a specific allowance to the husband, and agreed, also, that the husband should have the right to sue for this allowance, it was held that the husband, who was not a party to the agreement, could not maintain on it a suit.⁴

Partner
cannot sue
partnership
at law.

§ 808. If a company passes a resolution to employ an officer at a salary, and he negotiates with the company for the salary, agreeing to give his time for the salary, he can sue the company for the salary. But if there is merely a resolution adopted by the company that a particular person shall receive certain emoluments, he cannot sue for such emoluments until he has entered into contractual relations with the company; nor can he sue for a wrongful dismissal.⁵ And articles of association that a mine is to be purchased at a certain price will not, without any negotiations between the parties, sustain a suit by the owner of the mine against the company.⁶—When, however, the members of an association agree to subscribe certain sums to further a common object, and appoint a committee to collect the subscriptions due, the committee are entitled to sue for the subscriptions.⁷

Resolutions by a company to pay money to a third person do not entitle him to sue unless he personally negotiates with the company.

v. Smith, E. B. & E. 442. Joint and several covenants may be in like manner severed. *Rose v. Poulton*, 2 B. & Ad. 822.

¹ *De Tastet v. Shaw*, 1 B. & Ald. 669; *Morris's Est.*, L. R. 10 Ch. 68.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 440; *Worrall v. Grayson*, 1 M. & W. 166; *Holmes v. Higgins*, 1 B. & C. 74; *Harvey v. Kay*, 9 B. & C. 356.

³ *Ibid.*; *Bosanquet v. Wray*, 6 Taunt. 597.

⁴ *Tweddle v. Atkinson*, 1 B. & S. 393; see this case discussed, *supra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

⁵ *Eley v. Assurance Co.*, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 88; see also *Melhado v. Porto Alegre R. R.*, L. R. 9 C. P. 503.

⁶ *Pritchard's case*, L. R. 8 Ch. 956.

⁷ *Carr v. Bartlett*, 72 Me. 121; cited in full, *supra*, § 528; *Curry v. Rogers*, 21 N. H. 247; *Thompson v. Page*, 1 Met. (Mass.) 565; *Ives v. Sterling*, 6 Met. (Mass.) 310; *Watkins v. Eames*, 9 Cush. 537; *Athol Music Hall v. Carey*,

II. DEFENDANTS.

§ 809. Not only is the assent to a contract of the party charged necessary to bind him, but this assent must be coincident with the formation of the contract. It is true that a stranger may be liable in tort for wrongfully and maliciously procuring the breach of a contract,¹ but this is a liability not on a contract, but outside of the contract.² As a rule; a party, to be made liable on a debt, must assent to such liability.³ "A. cannot by paying X.'s debts unasked," says Sir W. Anson,⁴ "make X. his debtor," and he adopts, as settled by high authority,⁵ the rule that a man cannot, of his own will, pay another man's debt without his consent, and thereby convert himself into a creditor. "A voluntary payment made by one of a debt due by another, without his request, creates no assumpsit or liability on the part of the latter to the former."⁶—In this relation may be considered the cases heretofore noticed⁷ where vendees of mortgaged property agree to pay the mortgage debt. "If B. as grantee accepts a deed from A. containing a recital that the property was conveyed subject to a deed of trust made to secure a debt to C., and that B. assumed or agreed to pay the same, the effect of such a recital is to make the debt due to C. the debt of B., and to render B. personally liable therefor; by the acceptance of the deed a duty is imposed upon B. and the law implies a promise that he will perform it, on which in case of failure assumpsit will lie."⁸

Assent of
party
charged
necessary
to bind
him.

116 Mass. 471. As to privity of contract, see *supra*, § 506.

¹ Wh. on Neg. § 441; *Lampleigh v. Brathwait*, 1 Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 280; *Lunley v. Gye*, 2 E. & B. 216; *Young v. Brander*, 8 East, 12; *Bowen v. Hall*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 333.

² Wh. on Neg. § 441; *Pollock*, 3d ed. 209.

³ *Supra*, §§ 1 et seq., 506, 784; *Strawn v. O'Hara*, 86 Ill. 53.

⁴ Cont. 197.

⁵ *Durnford v. Messeter*, 5 M. & S. 446.

⁶ *Hearn v. Cullen*, 54 Md. 543; *Bartol, C. J.*, citing *Mayer v. Hughes*, 1 G. & J. 480. As to assignees, see *infra*, § 836.

⁷ *Supra*, § 786 a.

⁸ *Norton, J.*, *Wiggins Ferry Co. v. R. R.*, 73 Mo. 403; citing *Heim v. Vogel*, 69 Mo. 529; *Pitcher v. Swift*, 21 Vt. 298, citing *Aikins v. R. R.*, 26 Barb. 289; *Attix v. Pelan*, 5 Clark, Iowa, 336; *Burton v. Wills*, 30 Miss. 689; see to same effect, 1 Jones on Mortgages, § 756; *Conover v. Brown*, 29 N. J. Eq. 510.

§ 810. On the principle *expressio unius est exclusio alterius* the enumeration of specific parties in a contract excludes the supposition of others,¹ unless one of the named parties be shown to have acted for an undisclosed principal.² “Where there is such a deed as is technically called a deed *inter partes*, that is, a deed importing to be between the persons who are named in it, as executing the same, and not, as some deeds are, general to ‘all people,’ the immediate operation of the deed is to be confined to those persons who are parties to it; no stranger can take, except by way of remainder, nor can any stranger sue upon any of the covenants it contains.”³ To admit evidence to introduce a new party into a contract, would be to vary the contract essentially; and such evidence, unless for the purpose of explaining a latent ambiguity, or of disclosing a real principal, is inadmissible.⁴ Parol evidence, however, is admissible, as is elsewhere seen more fully, to bring out the real name of a party,⁵ and to remove latent ambiguity as to the designation of parties.⁶

Only parties to a contract can be sued on it.

§ 810 a. So far as concerns the respective liabilities of principal and agent on paper executed by the latter, the distinctions are obvious.⁷ A person who defines himself in a negotiable note or bill as treasurer or agent of a designated corporation, and signs the paper as such, binds not himself but the corporation.⁸ But it is otherwise where the party signs simply as

Illustrated in case of agents signing in their own names.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 444; Dicey, *ut supra*, 225; Southampton v. Brown, 6 B. & C. 718; Chesterfield Colliery v. Hawkins, 3 H. & C. 677; Hartzell v. Saunders, 49 Mo. 433; *supra*, § 674.

² Wh. on Agency, §§ 464; *supra*, § 802; *infra*, § 811.

³ Storer v. Gordon, 3 M. & S. 322; citing 2 Inst. 673; *supra*, § 788.

⁴ Leake, Cont. 2d ed. § 446; State v. Nashville, 2 Tenn. Ch. 755.

⁵ Nixon v. Cobleigh, 52 Ill. 387; Aultman v. Richardson, 7 Neb. 1.

⁶ See *supra*, § 804.

⁷ See *supra*, §§ 134, 802.

⁸ Lindus v. Melrose, 3 H. & N. 177; Bowen v. Morris, 2 Taunt. 374; Mann v. Chandler, 9 Mass. 335; Fiske v. Eldredge, 12 Gray, 474; Mott v. Hicks, 1 Cowen, 513; Brockway v. Allen, 17 Wend. 40; Lazarus v. Shearer, 2 Ala. N. S. 718; Hawk v. Marion Co., 48 Iowa, 472. In Simpson v. Garland, 72 Me. 40, the note read as follows: “1000, Carmel, April 22, 1877, for value received, we, the subscribers for Carmel Cheese Manufacturing Co., promise to pay William Simpson, or order, one thousand dollars in six months from date with interest. F. A. Simp-

agent,¹ and where the note can only be made operative by charging the party signing.² Liability attaches, also, to a

son, Rufus Work, A. S. Garland." It was held the note was the note of the Carmel Cheese Manufacturing Co. and not that of the signers, it appearing that the signers were directors of the company, and authorized to make the note for the company, and that it was given for money appropriated for the use of the company.

"The defendants,"² so it was said in the opinion of the court, "sign their own names only; but in the body of the note they say, 'we, the subscribers, for the Carmel Cheese Manufacturing Company, promise to pay.' If the words 'for the Carmel Cheese Manufacturing Company,' had been omitted from the body of the note, and had been written against the defendant's signatures, the authorities are quite uniform that the note would be the note of the company, and not of the defendants. *Sturdivant v. Hull*, 59 Maine, 172; *Atkins v. Brown*, id. 90; *Sheridan v. Carpenter*, 61 id. 83; *Winship v. Smith*, id. 121; *Ballou v. Talbot*, 16 Mass. 461; *Tucker Manufacturing Co. v. Fairbanks*, 98 id. 101; *Morell v. Coddington*, 4 Allen, 403; *Draper v. Mass. Steam Heating Co.*, 5 id. 338.

"By the rule laid down in *Nobleboro' v. Clark*, *supra*, the words used in the body of the note tending to show the meaning of the parties, should have the same force and effect as if following, or written against the defendants' signatures. Their meaning is as significant in the one case as in the other." On the last point, however, see *Morell v. Coddington*, 4 Allen, 403, *contra*. In *Mellen v. Moore*, 68 Me. 390, a note in the plural, "we promise," etc., signed "M. treasurer of the D. Association," was held to be the note of M. and not of the association.

¹ *Williams v. Robbins*, 16 Gray, 77; *Dubois v. Canal Co.*, 4 Wend. 285; *Quigley v. De Haas*, 82 Penn. St. 267; *Bickford v. Bank*, 42 Ill. 238; *Scott v. Baker*, 3 W. Va. 495.

² In *Wing v. Glick*, Sup. Ct. Iowa, 1881, the suit was on the following contract: "State of Iowa, County of Jones, Township of Hale. Mr. S. J. Wing, 132 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois. Dear Sir: Please deliver to W. H. Glick, at his residence, nine sets of national business and primary charts, at \$36 per set—\$324; and we agree to pay for said goods on the first day of March, 1879, with interest at six per cent. after due. W. H. Glick, President School Board. I. B. Southwick, Sec'y School Board." The defendants averred that the contract was not theirs, but the contract of the district township of Hale. But they were held liable personally. "It is well settled," so said Adams, C. J., "that where a person in executing a contract describes himself as agent without disclosing his principal, the contract becomes the personal obligation of the maker and no one else. *Kenyon v. Williams*, 19 Ind. 44. The case before us is not essentially different. The defendants describe themselves as officers, but the contract neither shows nor indicates the corporation of which they are officers. Some authorities have gone so far as to hold that the officer incurs a personal obligation, even where, in the description of himself, he fully sets out the corporation of which he is an officer. In *Ins. Co. v. Newhall*, 1 Allen, 130, the note upon which the action was brought was signed: 'Cheever Newhall, President of the Dorchester Avenue R. R. Co.' As the note con-

party signing as "executor of C. D.," he having no power as executor to issue paper.¹ It has also been held that the mere attaching of a title to the signer's name, such as "treasurer," or "director," does not itself shift the liability from the signer to the company of which he is the officer, unless in the body of the instrument he states that he signs for the company, or unless it should appear that he was known by the parties to be acting as agent for the company.² But it has been ruled to be otherwise when it is shown that the party signing has been in constant habit of signing notes in this way, which have been regularly paid.³—It follows, *a fortiori*, that the party signing is liable when there is no indication

tained no words in the body thereof purporting to bind the Dorchester Avenue Railroad Company, it was held to be the personal obligation of the maker. The same rule was held in *Fiske v. Eldridge*, 12 Gray, 476, where the note was signed: 'John S. Eldridge, Trustee of Sullivan R. R.;' and in *Sturdivant v. Hull*, 59 Me. 172, where the maker described himself as 'Treasurer of St. Paul's Parish;' and in *Barker v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Wend. 94, where the maker described himself as 'President of the Mechanics' Fire Ins. Co.;' and in *Powers v. Briggs*, 79 Ill. 493, where the makers described themselves as 'trustees of' a specified church; and in *Moss v. Livingston*, 4 Comst. 208, where an acceptor described himself as 'President of Rosendale Manufacturing Company.' See, also, *Hays v. Crutcher*, 54 Ind. 260; and *Gregory v. Leigh*, 33 Texas, 813. The defendants rely upon *Lacy v. Lumber Co.*, 43 Iowa, 510. Whether that case can be reconciled within the cases above cited, we need not determine. Conceding that it holds a very different rule, it is not authority for the defendants. The note in that case, it was held, appeared upon its face to be the obligation of the defendant corporation, at least with an ex-

planation of abbreviations used. In our opinion, the defendants in the case at bar, in executing the contract, assumed a personal obligation, and it was not proper, we think, to allow them to show by parol that such was not in fact the understanding." See, also, *Hayes v. Matthews*, 63 Ind. 412; *Cohokea v. Rantenburg*, 88 Ill. 219.

¹ *Childs v. Monins*, 2 Br. & B. 460; *Forster v. Fuller*, 6 Mass. 58; *Tassey v. Church*, 4 W. & S. 346.

² *Hills v. Bannister*, 8 Cow. 31.

³ *Jones v. Downman*, 4 Q. B. 235; *Childs v. Monius*, 2 Brod. & B. 460; *Dutton v. Marsh*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 361; *Moss v. Livingston*, 4 Comst. 208; *Rossiter v. Rossiter*, 8 Wend. 494; *Brinley v. Mann*, 2 Cush. 337; *Taft v. Brewster*, 9 Johns. R. 334; *Pentz v. Stanton*, 10 Wend. 277; *Stone v. Wood*, 7 Cow. 453; *Hills v. Bannister*, 8 Cow. 31; *Forster v. Fuller*, 6 Mass. 58; *Barker v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Wend. 94; *Collins v. Ins. Co.*, 17 Oh. St. 215; *Scott v. Baker*, 3 W. Va. 285; *Rand v. Hale*, 3 W. Va. 495; Wh. on Ag. §§ 490, 504. In *Baldwin v. Bank*, 1 Wall. 234, it was held admissible to prove by parol the bank of which the party signing was cashier, he simply signing as cashier.

that he acts on a principal's behalf.¹—A distinction has been taken in this respect between sealed and unsealed notes. If an unsealed negotiable note is signed by A. as "A. for B.," B. is held to be the party to be sued.² A different rule, however, has been propounded when the agent executes a sealed note with his own seal, and makes no reference in the body of the instrument to the principal. Thus, in a North Carolina case in 1881, the plaintiff sued upon the following bond: "On or before January 1, 1879, I promise to pay to the order of Albert S. Bryson, one thousand dollars with interest from date, being part payment of a certain tract of land, for which bond has been given, bearing even date with this note. Witness my hand and seal this 2d day of July, 1877. (Signed by H. S. Lucas. [Seal.] For Charles Callender, President of the Chester Mica and Porcelain Co.)" It was held by the supreme court that on this bond Lucas was personally liable.³—The

¹ Dutton v. Marsh, L. R. 6 Q. B. 361; Haverhill Ins. Co. v. Newhall, 1 Allen, 130; Barker v. Ins. Co., 3 Wend. 94; Wh. on Ag. §§ 449, 504; and see as to agencies of corporations, *supra*, § 134.

² Ibid.; Story on Agency, § 144; Bank of Cape Fear v. Wright, 3 Jones, N. C. 376.

³ "In our opinion," said Smith, C. J.; "the writing is in effect as well as in form the personal bond of the defendant, notwithstanding the mode of its execution and signature, and this proposition is fully supported by authority. Nowhere in the body of the note is the name of any supposed principal mentioned or referred to. Its language is entirely personal,—'I promise to pay Albert S. Bryson,'—and it concludes with the words, 'witness my hand and seal,' and then the seal is affixed to the name of the promisor, the defendant. While the consideration recited is the sale of a tract of land of which this is a part of the purchase-money, it is not stated to whom the sale was made, and this only appears

from the plaintiff's covenant, referred to as of the same date, and which when produced bears an earlier date. But waiving the discrepancy in the bonds, there is no incongruity in the defendant's assuming a personal obligation for the payment of the purchase-money for the land sold and to be conveyed to another, nor does this fact change or impair the individual liability incurred. Combe's case, 9 Coke, 76 b; Stone v. Wood, 7 Cowen, 453; Stackpole v. Arnold, 11 Mass. 27; Wilks v. Black, 2 East, 142; Appleton v. Binks, 5 ib. 148; Tippetts v. Walker, 4 Mass. 595; Duvall v. Craig, 2 Wheat. 45; Townsend v. Hubbard, 4 Hill, 351; De Witt v. Walton, 5 Seld. 571; Spencer v. Field, 10 Wend. 87; Quigley v. De Hass, 82 Penn. St. 267; Story on Agency, §§ 153 *et seq.*; 2 Kent Com. 931; Whitehead v. Reddick, 12 Ired. 95; Oliver v. Dix, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq. 158. These cases lead to the conclusion that the bond now in suit imposes a personal obligation on the defendant, and not on the company nor on its president, neither of whom is named

addition by parties executing an agreement, of the word "committee" after their names, does not relieve them from personal liability. Like the addition of the word "executor," it identifies a transaction, but does not divest responsibility.¹

§ 811. Where a contract is made with an agent representing an undisclosed principal, the promisee may sue the principal when disclosed, though unknown to be principal at the time of the contract.² The exception, however, is rather nominal than real. The proposal undoubtedly is made to A., the agent, but just as it is admissible for C., the creditor, to sue A. under the name of B., and to show on trial by parol that A., named in the contract, was really B., B. being A.'s real name, so it is admissible to sue P. on the contract, and to prove on the trial that A. during the negotiation was the mere representative of P., and that P. was the real party in interest.³ Another apparent exception is found in the cases where the statements made by promoters of a company before it had a legal existence have been held to bind the company.⁴ But this may be explained on the ground of estoppel, without invading the principle that persons not parties to a contract are not liable to suit for the non-performance of its conditions. The companies in question, if they did not authorize, at least adopted statements of their promoters, enjoying the franchises thereby obtained, and may on this ground have been held bound by such statements.⁵

in the body of the instrument, to pay the money specified and due under it." Bryson v. Lucas, 84 N. C. 680.

¹ Ulam v. Boyd, 87 Penn. St. 477.

² Wh. on Agency, § 464; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879), 40; Addison v. Gandasequi, 4 Taunt. 574; Priestly v. Fernie, 3 H. & C. 977; Thomson v. Davenport, 9 B. & C. 78; Dutton v. Marsh, L. R. 6 Q. B. 361; Ford v. Williams, 21 How. 287; Baldwin v. Leonard, 39 Vt. 260; Southard v. Sturtevant, 109 Mass. 390; Meeker v. Claghorn, 44 N. Y. 349; Youghioghny Iron Co. v. Smith, 66 Penn. St. 340;

Thomas v. Atkinson, 38 Ind. 248; Wheeler v. Reed, 36 Ill. 82; see Irvine v. Watson, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 414.

³ That undisclosed principal may sue, see *supra*, § 802.

⁴ Pollock, 3d ed. 209, citing Lindlay, I. 395-7.

⁵ Govett v. Richmond, 7 Sim. 1, rules that in a bill for specific performance of an award, a person not a party to the reference, who had not in any way assented to it, could be made a party, on the ground that he was interested in the subject matter. This decision Mr. Pollock (3d ed. 210) criticizes as

§ 812. We have already seen that if B., in discharge of a contractual duty to A., so conducts himself as negligently or wilfully to injure A., he is liable to A. in damages.¹ An action of tort, also, as we have seen, lies against the defendant for maliciously procuring a third person to break a contract with the defendant.² But this must be in an action based exclusively on the tort. On the contract a third party cannot sue.³

Action of tort may be maintained for abuse of contractual relations.

§ 813. By novation, as is elsewhere more fully seen, a new debtor may be grafted on an old agreement.⁴ Either to obtain the release of the original debtor, which by itself is a good consideration, or to obtain some benefit to the new promisor, emanating from the promisee, such a promise may be validly made.⁵

By novation a new debtor may be introduced.

“quite contrary to principle,” and holds that “it cannot stand with Lord Cottenham’s decision in *Tasker v. Small*, 3 My. & Cr. 63, that in a suit for the specific performance of a contract third persons claiming an interest in the subject matter are not even proper parties.” Mr. Pollock very properly adds that “even without this it is surely obvious (unless and until a court of final appeal shall think otherwise) that A. and B. have no business to submit C.’s rights to the arbitration of D.”

That a company can ratify a contract made by its promoters before its organization was denied in *Empress Engineering Co. in re*, L. R. 16 Ch. D. 125, overruling *Spiller v. Paris Rink*, L. R. 7 Ch. D. 368. “Companies have been held in equity to be bound by the agreements of their promoters, but on grounds independent of contract.” Pollock, 3d ed. 119, citing *Lindley*, i. 363,

395; see *Van Schaick v. R. R.*, 38 N. Y. 346.

¹ *Langridge v. Levy*, 2 M. & W. 519; Wh. on Neg. § 441, and cases there cited, and see *supra*, § 791, where a recovery against a telegraph company by the receiver of a wrong telegram is thus sustained, and *Little v. Banks*, 83 N. Y. 258, cited *supra*, § 786, which may be explained on the same ground.

² *Lumley v. Gye*, 2 E. & B. 216; aff. *Cattle v. Stockton Water Works*, L. R. 10 Q. B. 458; *Bowen v. Hall*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 333; see *Wald’s Pollock*, 188, citing *Walker v. Cronin*, 107 Mass. 555; *Rice v. Manly*, 66 N. Y. 82; *Jones v. Stanley*, 76 N. C. 355, and other cases.

³ *Atkinson v. Water Works*, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 441; *Nickerson v. Hydraulic Works*, 46 Conn. 24; *Davis v. Water Works*, 54 Iowa, 61; cited *supra*, § 786. But see *Little v. Banks*, 83 N. Y. 258, cited *supra*, § 786.

⁴ See §§ 852 *et seq.*

⁵ See *supra*, § 505.

III. JOINT PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS.

1. *Plaintiffs.*

§ 814. Where a contract is made for the benefit of two or more joint promisees, all must join in the suit;¹ nor will a disclaimer even by deed by one of such joint promisees of all interest in the debt discharge it from his control so as to enable his joint promisees to sue without him.²—As will be hereafter seen, death severs a joint contract so that the survivor can sue; and a severance, also, is worked by one of the joint creditors settling with the debtor for his claim in such a way as not to work a release.³ It has been also held that a severance may be worked by the acceptance by each of the joint promisees of special independent promises from the debtor.⁴

All joint
promisees
must join.

Otherwise
when cre-
ditors are
several.

§ 815. When, however, the promisees are not joint, but several—i. e., when on the face of the obligation each has a distinct interest—any one of

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 140, 452; 1 Smith's Penn. St. 126; Jacobs v. Davis, 34 Md. L. C. 7th ed. 877; Pease v. Hirst, 10 204; Tapscott v. Williams, 10 Ohio, B. & C. 122; Hopkinson v. Lee, 6 Q. 442; Sims v. Tyre, 3 Brev. 249; Lucas B. 964; Rose v. Poulton, 2 B. & Ad. v. McAlilly, 1 McMul. 311. That one 822; Soorsbie v. Park, 12 M. & W. party may use the name of another 146; see Wakefield v. Brown, 9 Q. B. without his consent, on tendering in- 209; Jordan v. Wilkins, 3 Wash. C. demnity, see Chambers v. Donaldson, C. 40; Dob v. Halsey, 16 Johns. 34; 9 East, 471; Wright v. McLemore, 10 Heron v. Hoffner, 3 Rawle, 393; Wil- Yerg. 235.

² Ibid.; Petrie v. Bury, 3 B. & C. 353; Wetherell v. Langston, 1 Ex. 634; see Dicey on Parties, Am. ed. 1879, 11, 104. And see as sustaining the text Ulmer v. Cunningham, 2 Greenl. 117; Moody v. Sewall, 14 Me. 295; Hilliker v. Loop, 5 Vt. 116; Wright v. Post, 3 Conn. 142; Halliday v. Doggett, 6 Pick. 359; Tate v. Ins. Co., 13 Grey, 79; Dob v. Halsey, 16 Johns. 34; Sweigart v. Berk, 8 S. & R. 308; Michener v. Dale, 23 Penn. St. 59; Meason v. Kaine, 67

³ Austin v. Walsh, 2 Mass. 405; Baker v. Jewell, 6 Mass. 460; Beach v. Hotchkiss, 2 Conn. 697; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 11.

⁴ Ibid.; Austin v. Welsh, 2 Mass. 401; Gould v. Gould, 6 Wend. 263. That a party who is obligor in a joint claim, of which, with others, he is obligee, cannot maintain an action at law on the claim, see Bedford v. Bruton, 1 Bing. N. C. 399; Beecham v. Smith, E. B. & E. 442; Faulkner v. Faulkner, 73 Mo. 339; *supra*, § 805. It is otherwise with joint and several obligations. Ibid.

them may sue.¹ But the mere designating of the shares of the promisees does not produce a severance unless it should appear that it was intended that each party should separately sue for his specific claim.² It is otherwise, however, when the interests of the promisees are practically several.³ The tests given by Mr. Dicey⁴ are (1) "where there is a separate consideration proceeding from different persons, there is considered to be a contract with each of them, and they, therefore, cannot join in an action for breach of contract."⁵ (2) "Where the consideration moves from several persons jointly, such persons, as having the joint legal interest in the contract, should be joined as plaintiffs in suing for a breach of the contract."⁶

§ 816. The question of the relationship of promisees to each other in this connection is one of construction.⁷ It has been said, indeed, that when the promisees have separate and unequal interests, then their claims are to be regarded as several.⁸ But this should yield to the general meaning of the document. Parties having separate and unequal interests may agree to become joint promisees; those having equal interests to become several promisees, and so with regard to debtors.⁹ But when the interest of the promisees is entire, and the debt is limited to them in aggregate, the inference is that the obligation is joint.¹⁰

Question
one of con-
struction
and parol
explana-
tion.

¹ *Geer v. Richmond*, 6 Vt. 76; *Catawissa R. R. v. Titus*, 49 Penn. St. 277; *Quisenberry v. Artis*, 1 Duvall, 30.

² *Byrne v. Fitzhugh*, 1 C. M. & R. 613; see *Hall v. Leigh*, 8 Cranch, 50; *Blanchard v. Dyer*, 21 Me. 111; *Pearson v. Parker*, 3 N. H. 366; *Smith v. Talcott*, 21 Wend. 202; *Settembre v. Putnam*, 30 Cal. 490.

³ *Ship Potomac in re*, 2 Black. 581; *Hall v. Leigh*, 8 Cranch, 50; *Bunker v. Tufts*, 55 Me. 180; *Sharp v. Conkling*, 16 Vt. 355; *Yates v. Foot*, 12 Johns. 1; *Fauble v. Davis*, 48 Iowa, 462; *Jones v. Etheridge*, 6 Port. 208.

⁴ *Parties* (Am. ed. 1879), 106.

⁵ *Hill v. Tucker*, 1 Taunt. 7; *Chanter*

v. Leese, 4 M. & W. 295; *Lucas v. Beale*, 10 C. B. 739.

⁶ *Lush*, Practice, 3d ed. 21; *Jones v. Robinson*, 1 Exch. 454; *Agacio v. Forbes*, 14 Moo. P. C. 160.

⁷ *Supra*, § 641 *et seq.*, 803.

⁸ *Shep. Touch.* 166, Preston's note; *Servante v. James*, 10 B. & C. 410; *Eccleston v. Clipsham*, 1 Wms. Saund. 153; *Ludlow v. McCrea*, 1 Wend. 228; *Phillips v. Bonsall*, 2 Binn. 138.

⁹ *Mills v. Ladbroke*, 7 M. & G. 28; *Poole v. Hill*, 6 M. & W. 835; *Hall v. Leigh*, 8 Cranch, 50.

¹⁰ *Lane v. Drinkwater*, 1 C. M. & R. 613; *May v. May*, 1 C. & P. 44; *Pickering v. De Rochemont*, 45 N. H. 76.

The distinction is illustrated by rulings to the effect that when a payment is made by several from a *joint* fund, belonging to them *in solido*, they must join in a suit for reimbursement; but that it is otherwise if the payment, though joint, is made up by the contributors from their individual means.¹ When sureties, also, pay a debt jointly, and this is all that appears in the transaction, they must join in the action against their principal;² but this yields to any inferences that the payment was by individual separate contribution, in which case each surety is to sue separately.³—Where the intention is that the promisees are to have separate interests, then their claims are to be construed as several. Such is the case with composition deeds by debtors giving each promisee a distinct interest;⁴ and when distinct and inconsistent duties are to be performed to the promisees individually, this implies severance.⁵—A note payable to A. or B. has been held to make A. and B. joint payees.⁶—Parol evidence, also, in case of latent ambiguities, is admissible to explain the relations of the parties.⁷

§ 817. The prevalent opinion at common law is that a contract cannot be so framed as to give the promisees the right to sue on it both jointly and severally.⁸ The promisees must be held as entitled to sue either jointly only or severally only.⁹ Obligations of this class, therefore, must be construed to be joint, or joint and several, as the case may be.¹⁰ And it has been held

Plaintiffs
cannot sue
both jointly
and sever-
ally.

¹ Pearson v. Barker, 3 N. H. 366; Appleton v. Bascom, 3 Met. 169; Smith v. Hicks, 1 Wend. 206.

² Appleton v. Bascom, 3 Metc. 169; Clapp v. Rice, 15 Gray, 557; Gould v. Gould, 6 Wend. 263.

³ Lombard v. Cobb, 14 Me. 222.

⁴ Gresty v. Gibson, L. R. 1 Exch. 112.

⁵ Owston v. Ogle, 13 East, 538; Brand v. Boulcott, 3 B. & P. 235; Jewell v. Cunard, 3 Wood. & M. 277; Olmstead v. Bailey, 35 Conn. 584.

⁶ Willoughby v. Willoughby, 5 N. H. 244; Osgood v. Pearsons, 4 Gray, 455; though see Ellis v. McLemoor, 1 Bailey, 13, and Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879), 10.

⁷ Wh. on Ev. §§ 949 *et seq.*; Cross v. Williams, 72 Mo. 577; *supra*, § 804.

⁸ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1341; Dicey, *ut supra*, 111; Bradburne v. Botfield, 14 M. & W. 559, 573; James v. Emery, 8 Taunt. 245; Dob v. Halsey, 16 Johns. 34; Sweigart v. Berk, 8 S. & R. 308.

⁹ See Pugh v. Stringfield, 3 C. B. N. S. 2; S. C., 4 C. B. N. S. 364; Broom, Parties, 2d ed. §§ 20-21; Lush, Practice, 3d ed. 222; Jewell v. Cunard, 3 Wood. & M. 277.

¹⁰ Slingsby's case, 5 Co. 19 a; Bradburne v. Botfield, 14 M. & W. 573. This rule is criticized by Rolfe, B., in Keightley v. Watson, 3 Ex. 724, saying: "it

that the obligation cannot be treated as joint so far as concerns some of the obligors, and several so far as concerns others; it must be regarded as joint as to all, or several as to all.¹ But in the same contract there may be two distinct covenants, one joint, and the other several.²

§ 818. All the members of a partnership should be plaintiffs in a suit on a debt due the firm;³ nor does it make any difference that the partnership has been dissolved between incurring the debt and bringing suit.⁴ The names of *dormant* partners, not privy to the contract, like the names of undisclosed principals, may be omitted.⁵ And a partner who is the sole ostensible party to the contract, and exclusively interested in it, can sue on it alone.⁶

All partners should sue.

§ 819. Members of a partnership, or of any business association in general, cannot depute any one person to represent them for the purpose of bringing suit.⁷ In England this question has arisen from the efforts of unincorporated societies to get rid of the difficulties attending joint suits by appointing a specific person to sue on contracts in which they are interested. Attempts of this kind, however, have failed on the ground "that the proper person to bring an action is the person whose right has been violated."⁸ This principle has been held to invalidate a suit brought by the managers of an

Qualification as to one of several contractors suing as representative.

is clear that parties can so contract by separate deeds; why, then, should they not be able to do so by separate covenants in the same deed?" *Gresty v. Gibson*, L. R. 1 Exch. 112; see *Howe v. Hendley*, 25 Me. 116.

¹ *Cabell v. Vaughan*, 1 Wms. Saund. 291; *Streatfield v. Halliday*, 3 T. R. 782; see *infra*, §§ 825 *et seq.*

² *James v. Emory*, 8 Taunt. 245; *Duval v. Craig*, 2 Wheat. 45; *Calvert v. Bradley*, 18 How. U. S. 580; *Sharp v. Conklin*, 16 Vt. 355.

³ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 13; *Story*, Part. § 241; *Collyer*, Part. §§ 649 *et seq.*; *Halliday v. Doggett*, 6 Pick. 359; *Hewes v. Bayley*, 20 Pick.

96; *Gould v. Gould*, 6 Wend. 264; *Wilson v. Wallace*, 8 S. & R. 53.

⁴ *Page v. Wolcott*, 15 Gray, 536.

⁵ *Skinner v. Stocks*, 4 B. & Ald. 437; *Steel v. Western*, 7 Moore, 31; *Lapham v. Green*, 9 Vt. 407; *Lord v. Baldwin*, 6 Pick. 352; *Beach v. Hayward*, 10 Ohio, 455.

⁶ *Parsons v. Crosby*, 5 Esp. 199; *Glossop v. Colman*, 1 Stark. 21; *Davenport v. Rackstrow*, 1 C. & P. 89.

⁷ *Parsons v. Crosby*, 5 Esp. 199; *Barker v. Stubbs*, 1 M. & G. 44.

⁸ *Willes, J., Gray v. Pearson*, L. R. 5 C. P. 568; see *Sweigart v. Berk*, 8 S. & R. 308; *Dicey*, *at supra*, 116.

unincorporated mutual marine insurance company;¹ by the purser for the time being of a cost-book company;² and by the directors of a company.³ Even negotiable paper made to the treasurer for the time being of an unincorporated society is open to the same objection, the reason given being that "the payee must be a person capable of being ascertained at the time of making the note or accepting the bill."⁴ It is otherwise, however, when to the actual contracting parties (*e. g.*, the trustees of a particular chapel) is joined the treasurer alternatively, since the treasurer is to be regarded in such case as the agent of the trustees to receive the money.⁵ There is nothing, also, in this rule which prevents the parties to simple contracts not based on negotiable paper from providing that one of their number shall be empowered to sue for any breach of the contract for the benefit of all but the parties sued.⁶ This is common in partnership agreements in which it is stipulated that one partner may sue, in the names of all but the delinquent, for whatever may be due from a defaulting partner.⁷ In equity, however, and in common law courts having equity jurisdiction, any one member, either in his own behalf or on behalf of himself and others, may proceed for an account; and in England "the rules of the supreme court, following the former practice of the court of chancery, now provide that 'where there are numerous persons having the same interest in one action, one or more of such parties may sue or be sued, or may be authorized by the court to defend in such action on behalf or for the benefit of all parties so interested.'"⁸ The only exception is that a person not really interested cannot be put forward as a representative.⁹

¹ *Gray v. Pearson, ut supra.*

² *Hybart v. Parker*, 4 C. B. N. S. 209.

³ *Hall v. Bainbridge*, 1 Man. & G. 42; *Phelps v. Lyle*, 10 A. & E. 113.

⁴ *Pollock*, 3d ed. 223, citing *Storm v. Stirling*, 3 E. & B. 832, under name of *Cowie v. Stirling*, 6 E. & B. 333; *Yates v. Nash*, 8 C. B. N. S. 581.

Holmes v. Jacques, L. R. 1 Q. B. 376.

⁶ See *Dicey, ut supra*, 116; *Hybart v. Parker*, 4 C. B. N. S. 209.

⁷ *Radenhurst v. Bates*, 3 Bing. 463; *Pollock*, 3d ed. 221. "Of course," says Mr. Pollock commenting on this case, "they must take care to make the penalty not to the whole firm, but to the members of the firm *minus* the offending partner."

⁸ *Pollock*, 3d ed. 223.

⁹ *Ibid.*

§ 820. Upon the death of a joint promisee, the survivor alone can sue, and on the death of the survivor the right accrues solely to his personal representatives.¹ In equity, however, the survivor who collects a debt may be liable to the personal representatives of the deceased promisee.² But the executor of a deceased promisee cannot be joined with the surviving promisee.³ No such survivorship exists as to several debts.⁴

On death of joint promisee debt survives.

§ 821. When there are two or more joint promisees, a release by one releases for all, and a receipt by one is a receipt for all.⁵ The court, however, will set aside a release that is plainly fraudulent, so far as concerns joint creditors;⁶ though not because the party releasing, if a party to the record, and representing an interest, had no actual personal interest.⁷ But supposing the release to be *bona fide*, it operates where it is validly⁸ executed by one of several joint creditors, whether acting in a personal or fiduciary capacity, as a release of the debt so far as concerns all the joint creditors.⁹ It is only in cases where the release

One joint promisee may release.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 453; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 21; *Martin v. Crompe*, 1 Ld. Ray. 340; *Jones v. Yates*, 9 B. & C. 532; *Anderson v. Martindale*, 1 East, 497; *Jell v. Douglass*, 4 B. & Ald. 374; *Crocker v. Beall*, 1 Low. 416; *Burnside v. Merrick*, 4 Met. 540; *Murray v. Mumford*, 6 Cow. 441; *Stowell v. Drake*, 3 Zab. 310; *Kinsler v. McCants*, 4 Rich. 46.

² *Martin v. Crompe*, 1 Ld. Ray. 340; *Anderson v. Martindale*, 1 East, 497; *Vickers v. Cowell*, 1 Beav. 529; see *supra*, §§ 765-6.

³ *Smith v. Franklin*, 1 Mass. 480; *Peters v. Davis*, 7 Mass. 257; *Clark v. Parish*, 1 Bibb, 547, 3 Bibb, 261; *Murphy v. Bank*, 5 Ala. 421.

⁴ 1 Saund. 153; *Enys v. Donnithorne*, 2 Burr. 1197; *Carthrae v. Brown*, 3 Leigh, 98.

⁵ *Infra*, § 949; Dicey, *ut supra*, 108; *Jacomb v. Harwood*, 2 Ves. Sen. 265; *Johnson v. Holdsworth*, 4 Dow. P. C.

63; *Herbert v. Piggett*, 2 C. & M. 384; *Rawstorne v. Gandell*, 15 M. & W. 304; *Tuckerman v. Newhall*, 17 Mass. 581; *Wiggin v. Tudor*, 23 Pick. 444; *Pierson v. Hooker*, 3 Johns. 68; *Napier v. McLeod*, 9 Wend. 120; *Newcomb v. Raynor*, 21 Wend. 108; *Bruen v. Marquand*, 17 Johns. 58; and cases cited *infra*, §§ 949, 957. As to whether an informal discharge operates as a release, see *infra*, § 941. As to release generally, see *infra*, § 1031.

⁶ *Jones v. Herbert*, 7 Taunt. 421; *Piercy v. Fynney*, L. R. 12 Eq. 69; *Barker v. Richardson*, 1 Y. & J. 362; *Skaife v. Jackson*, 3 B. & C. 422; *Gram v. Cadwell*, 5 Cow. 489; see *Phillips v. Clagett*, 11 M. & W. 84.

⁷ *Gibson v. Winter*, 5 B. & Ad. 102.

⁸ *Infra*, § 941.

⁹ *Ibid.*; 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1152; Bac. Abr. Release, D. *Wilkinson v. Lindo*, 7 M. & W. 81; *Halsey v. Whitney*, 4 Mason, 206; *Decker v.*

is given in fraud of the other joint creditors and in collusion with the debtor that equity will interfere.¹

§ 822. An unamended non-joinder of a plaintiff who ought to be joined, if it appears on the pleadings, is fatal on demurrer;² if it appears on trial, and is not amended, is ground for a nonsuit, or for a verdict for the defendant.³ Under the English statutes, now in substance adopted in most jurisdictions in this country, the defect of non-joinder of plaintiffs can be cured before or during trial.⁴ At common law, in arrest of judgment or in error, such non-joinder, if material, and if apparent on the record, will be fatal.⁵

§ 823. What has been said of non-joinder applies to misjoinder, when such misjoinder affects the cause of action. But in England, when an action is "brought by A. and B., which should be brought by B. alone, judgment (under the common law procedure act, and under similar statutes in this country) may be given in favor of such one (or more) of them as are entitled to recover. But the defendant, though unsuccessful, is entitled to any costs occasioned by the misjoinder."⁶

Livingston, 15 Johns. 479; Murray v. Blatchford, 1 Wend. 583; Smith v. Stone, 4 Gill & J. 310.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 933; Piercy v. Fynney, L. R. 12 Eq. 69.

² Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 15; Debolt v. Carter, 31 Ind. 355.

³ Dicey on Parties, Am. ed. 1879, 502; Leake, 2d ed. 453; Chanter v. Leese, 4 M. & W. 295; Baker v. Jewell, 6 Mass. 460; Beach v. Hotchkiss, 2 Conn. 697; Ehle v. Purdy, 6 Wend. 629; Waldsmith v. Waldsmith, 2 Ohio, 156.

⁴ Wickens v. Steel, 2 C. B. N. S. 488; Robson v. Doyle, 3 E. & B. 396; Wilkin v. Reed, 15 C. B. 192.

⁵ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 15; 1 Saund. 154, note (1); Snelgrove v. Hunt, 2 Stark. 374; Wiggin v. Cummings, 8 Allen, 353; Wright v. Post, 3 Conn. 142; Ziele v. Campbell, 2 John. Ca. 384; Wilson v. Wallace, 8 S. & R. 53. *Aliter* by statute. Lewis v. McNatt, 65 N. C. 63.

⁶ Dicey on Parties (Am. ed. of 1879), 504, citing Bremner v. Hull, L. R. 1 C. P. 748; see Lillard v. Ruckers, 9 Yerg. 64. In Whiting v. Cook, 8 Allen, 63, it was held that it was error requiring reversal to enter a joint judgment for a sum of money bequeathed to be equally divided between plaintiffs.

2. *Defendants.*

§ 824. Joint promisors or contractors must be sued jointly, the rule being that where several persons are jointly liable on a contract, they must all be sued in an action for the breach thereof;¹ and this, though the promisors agree among themselves that the duty is to be performed by one of them exclusively.² The rule, however, does not apply where a co-debtor lives out of the jurisdiction;³ or where he is not *capax negotii*;⁴ or where he is relieved by the statute of limitations.⁵

Joint defendants must be sued jointly

§ 825. "If A. and B. covenant jointly and severally, the covenant may be joint or several, and the covenantors may be sued either altogether, or all of them apart, at the election of the covenantee."⁶ A joint and several promissory note, therefore, may be treated either as a joint note, or as a series of as many separate notes as there are distinct joint and several makers.⁷ Hence every joint and several debt includes a joint debt, and as many several debts as there are debtors. When the debt is several as well as joint, the plaintiff is at liberty to proceed against the parties jointly, or each separately, though their interest be joint.⁸

Debts may be joint or several.

¹ Dicey, *ut supra*, 230; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 48; 1 Wms. Saund. 291; Platt on Cov. 117; Beggs v. Butler, 9 Paige, 226; Pollard v. Collier, 8 Ohio, 43; McCall v. Price, 1 McCord, 82. As to mode of objecting to non-joinder see *infra*, § 833.

² Lodge v. Dicus, 3 B. & Ald. 611. See on this point *supra*, § 808.

³ Joll v. Curzon, 4 C. B. 249.

⁴ See Boyle v. Webster, 17 Q. B. 950.

⁵ Boydell v. Drummond, 2 Camp. 157.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 454, citing Shepp. Touch. by Preston, 166, 180; Fletcher v. Dyche, 2 T. R. 32; see Hemmenway v. Stone, 7 Mass. 58; Peckham v. North Parish, 16 Pick. 274; Ernst v. Bartle, 1 John. Ca. 319; McCready v. Freed-

ley, 3 Rawle, 251; Knisely v. Shenberg, 7 Watts, 193.

⁷ Beecham v. Smith, E. B. & E. 442; Owen v. Wilkinson, 5 C. B. N. S. 526.

⁸ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 51; 2 Ch. Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1355; 1 Saund. 153, note (1). In Massachusetts persons severally liable upon contracts in writing including all parties to negotiable paper, may be joined in the same cause of action. See Wallis v. Carpenter, 13 Allen, 19; Costigan v. Lunt, 104 Mass. 217.

"Each party to a joint contract is severally liable in one sense, i. e., if sued severally and he does not plead in abatement, he is liable to pay the entire debt; but he is not severally liable in the same sense as he is on a joint and several bond, which instrument,

§ 826. The question whether a debt is joint or joint and several depends on the construction of the terms used.¹ “With respect to the rights of two or more persons joining in a contract as creditors, the general rule of construction is to the effect that a contract will be construed to be joint or several, according to the interest of the parties, if the words are capable of that construction, or even if they are not inconsistent with it; if the words are ambiguous or will admit of it, the contract will be joint if the interest be joint, and it will be several if the interest be several.”² What has been said with regard to written promises applies equally to implied promises. The intent of the parties is to prevail.³ But as a general rule, where the consideration is joint the promise is joint.⁴

Debt due
on its face
from two
or more
debtors is
joint.

§ 827. When a debt is payable by two or more debtors, it is on its face joint, and not joint and several.⁵ The question, however, is one of construction, to be governed by a survey of the entire document.⁶

though on one piece of parchment or paper, in effect composes the joint bond of all and the several bonds of each of the obligors.”—Parke, B., in *King v. Hoare*, 13 M. & W. 505.

“When the contract is joint and several, and the debt or demand considerable, it is most advisable to proceed separately, for if all the parties be joined, and one of them die after judgment and before execution, the remedy at law against the personal estate or assets of the deceased is determined.”—Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879), 51; *Foster v. Hooper*, 2 Mass. 572; *Com. v. Miller*, 8 S. & R. 452.

¹ See *supra*, §§ 641 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 829; *Eaden v. Titchmarsh*, 1 A. & E. 691; *Knisely v. Shenberger*, 7 Watts, 193; *Jacobs v. Davis*, 34 Md. 204; *Carthrae v. Brown*, 3 Leigh, 98; *Lloyd v. Ashby*, 2 C. & P. 138.

² Leake, 2d ed. 457; *Shepp. Touch. by Prest.* 166; adopted in *Sorsbie v. Park*, 12 M. & W. 146; and *Keightley v. Watson*, 3 Ex. 716; and see *Ludlow v. McCrea*, 1 Wend. 228.

³ *Hall v. Leigh*, 8 Cranch, 51; *Boggs v. Curtin*, 10 S. & R. 211; *supra*, §§ 627 *et seq.*

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 506 *et seq.*; *Jones v. Robinson*, 1 Exch. 454; *Chanter v. Leese*, 5 M. & W. 701; *Hatsall v. Griffith*, 2 Cr. & M. 679. Joint obligations are joint and several under the Missouri statute. *Knox Co. Bk. v. Cottey*, 70 Mo. 150.

⁵ *Shep. Touch.* 375; *King v. Hoare*, 13 M. & W. 499; *English v. Blundall*, 8 C. & P. 332; *Ehle v. Purdy*, 6 Wend. 629; *Yorks v. Peck*, 14 Barb. 644.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 641 *et seq.* As to construction based on interest, see *supra*, § 816.

§ 828. When the singular "I" instead of the plural "we" is used, this is a presumption that the obligation was meant to be several;¹ though even here distinctive phraseology in this respect must yield to the general tenor of the instrument.²—The signing and sealing by an individual, as for a separate debt, implies intended severance.³

Otherwise
if debt is
payable in-
dividually.

§ 829. By the *obligatio in solidum* of the Roman law, each of several debtors became liable for the solid or entire debt, or one debtor binds himself alternatively and separately to each of several creditors.⁴ Supposing that there are several creditors and several debtors, each creditor can demand the whole debt from each debtor, and if one debtor pays, the rest are all relieved.⁵ A defence, therefore, purely personal to a single debtor or to a single creditor, does not, if it does not amount to payment, release the debt so far as it concerns the other parties. It is otherwise, however, when the debt is paid, or tendered, or when there is compensation or novation going to the whole obligation.⁶ In our own law we have illustrations of this kind of obligation in cases in which a principal debtor and sureties become bound severally for a particular debt. The creditor may sue either separately, though payment by any one of them extinguishes the debt so far as the creditor is concerned.⁷ In such case the surety who pays the debt is entitled to contribution from the principal.⁸

Debtors
may make
themselves
severally
liable to
each of
several
creditors.

§ 830. The liabilities of partners are joint and several, at least in equity, although by the strict rule of the common law "the legal remedy exists only against the survivors."⁹ As the rule is stated by James, L.

Liability of
partners is
joint and
several.

¹ *March v. Ward*, Peake, 130; *Van Alstyne v. Van Slyck*, 10 Barb. 387; *Dill v. White*, 52 Wis. 459; and see *Hemmenway v. Stone*, 7 Mass. 58.

² *Slater v. Magraw*, 12 G. & J. 265.

³ *Ibid.*; *Townsend v. Hubbard*, 4 Hill, 351.

⁴ See Vangerow, iii. § 593; Demangeat, des obligations solidaire, Unterholzner, 1, §§ 86–91.

⁵ Puchta, § 233; L. 14, pr. D. de nox act. (9, 4) Windscheid, § 298.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Leake, 2d ed. 454; *Dering v. Winchelsea*, 1 Wh. & T. L. C. 4th Am. ed. 120; *Campbell v. Rothwell*, 47 L. J. C. P. 144.

⁸ *Holborn Union v. St. Leonard*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 145. That a promise to several parties must be either joint or several, see *supra*, §§ 817, 825.

⁹ Leake, 2d ed. 451; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 48; *Devaynes v. Noble*, 1 Mer. 564; *Beresford v. Browning*, L.

J., "The liability of partners for property acquired by them as partners is in equity joint and several. That is the usual form of expressing the rule, but it would be more accurate to say that, so far as regards partners, where there is in equity no survivorship of property, there is in equity no survivorship of liability."¹ Nor need dormant partners, any more than undisclosed principals, be sued.²

§ 831. When there are two or more joint debtors, the release under seal of one releases all.³ Nor in such case is it any reply, unless fresh consideration should be proved, that the surviving debtor agreed to remain liable for the debt.⁴ Where, however, the intention is to reconstruct the agreement by way of novation, then, if the discharge of one party be at the request of the other, and was the consideration of the new agreement, the new agreement will stand.⁵ And when it is expressly provided in an agreement that a release given to one of two joint obligors is not to prejudice the right of the plaintiff to sue both obligors jointly—or when a release is given to one of two partners with a proviso that this is not to operate to discharge the other partner, but that notwithstanding the release the partners may be sued jointly—in such cases the debt is not extinguished.⁶—Whether such a release to be effective must be under seal has been much discussed. At common law it

R. 1 C. D. 30. See *Robertson v. Smith*, 18 Johns. 459; *Smith v. Black*, 9 S. & R. 142.

¹ *Beresford v. Browning*, L. R. 1 C. D. 30; adopted *Leake*, 2d ed. 451.

² *Robinson v. Wilkinson*, 3 Price. 538; *Hudson v. Robinson*, 4 M. & S. 475; *Dickinson v. Valpy*, 10 B. & C. 128; *New York Dry Dock Co. v. Treadwell*, 19 Wend. 525.

³ *Brooks v. Stuart*, 9 Ad. & El. 854; *Cheetham v. Ward*, 1 Bos. & P. 633; *Dean v. Newhall*, 8 T. R. 168; *Lunt v. Stevens*, 24 Me. 534; *Shaw v. Pratt*, 22 Pick. 308; *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391. As to accord and satisfaction with one debtor, see *infra*,

§ 998. As to release by joint debtor, see *supra*, § 831; *infra*, §§ 1031 *et seq.*

⁴ *Brooks v. Stuart*, 9 A. & E. 854; *McAllister v. Sprague*, 34 Me. 296; *Shaw v. Pratt*, 22 Pick. 305; *Pond v. Williams*, 1 Gray, 630. As to covenant not to sue one of several joint debtors, see *infra*, § 1036.

⁵ See *infra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; *Burke v. Noble*, 48 Penn. St. 168; modifying in this respect *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391.

⁶ *Solly v. Forbes*, 2 Br. & B. 38; *Twopenny v. Young*, 3 B. & C. 210. See as to Indiana, *Eldred v. Bank*, 71 Ind. 543; *infra*, § 832.

must be under seal.¹ In Pennsylvania, where equity is administered under common law forms, the seal is not necessary;² and this is now the case in all jurisdictions where a release on a sufficient consideration is proved;³ or where the release amounts to an accord and satisfaction.⁴—The reason for the rule in general is that, unless it were maintained, “the co-debtor, after paying the debt, might sue him who had been released for contribution; and so in effect he would not be released at all;”⁵ and this has been applied to all releases on joint contracts.⁶—But a covenant not to sue one joint debtor does not release the other;⁷ nor is an informal discharge of one joint debtor a discharge of the others.⁸ In England, however, an accord and satisfaction with one joint debtor, though not under seal, discharges the others;⁹ though it is otherwise, as we have seen, with a mere covenant not to sue.¹⁰—Although in law the release by a creditor of one surety releases the others from their liability,¹¹ yet in equity it has been held that a discharge of a particular surety after a composition with such surety does not preclude the creditor from recovering from the other surety his share of the original obligation.¹²

¹ *Infra*, § 941; 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1133; *Walker v. McCullough*, 4 Greenl. 421; *Lunt v. Stevens*, 24 Me. 534; *Shaw v. Pratt*, 22 Pick. 308; *Rowley v. Stoddard*, 7 Johns. 209; *De Zeny v. Bailey*, 9 Wend. 336.

² *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391.

³ *Infra*, § 941.

⁴ *Infra*, § 996.

⁵ Per cur. *North v. Wakefield*, 13 Q. B. 536.

⁶ *Nicholson v. Revill*, 4 A. & E. 675; *Cheetham v. Ward*, 1 B. & P. 630.

⁷ *Dean v. Newhall*, 8 T. R. 168; *Henderson v. Stobart*, 5 Ex. 99; *Shed v. Pierce*, 17 Mass. 628; *Conch v. Mills*, 21 Wend. 424; see *McLellan v. Bank*, 24 Me. 566. Whether a deed is a release or a covenant not to sue is a question of construction; see *Cocks v. Nash*, 9 Bing. 348; *McAllister v. Sprague*, 34 Me. 296; *infra*, § 941.

⁸ *Shaw v. Pratt*, 22 Pick. 308, in which case Dewey, J., said: “Nothing but a technical release under seal discharging one of several promisors can operate to discharge the other promisors from their liability on the contract. This principle is well settled and sustained by many adjudicated cases. *Walker v. McCulloch*, 4 Greenl. 421; *Harrison v. Close*, 2 Johns. 449; *Rowley v. Stoddard*, 7 Johns. 209; *De Zeng v. Bailey*, 9 Wend. 336.”

⁹ *Nicholson v. Revill*, 4 Ad. & El. 675; relying on *Cheetham v. Ward*, 1 Bos. & P. 630; and see *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391.

¹⁰ *Clayton v. Kynaston*, 2 Salk. 574.

¹¹ *Nicholson v. Revill*, 4 Ad. & El. 675; 6 N. & M. 200; *Pledge v. Buss*, Johns. Ch. 663.

¹² *Story's Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. § 498 a, citing *Gifford ex parte*, 6 Ves. 805;

But the better opinion is that a surety is only to be made liable on the terms of his contract, and that if the exact performance of this contract is made impossible by the action of the creditor in modifying its terms with the principal or with co-sureties, then the contract no longer binds.¹ But if the rights of the creditor against the surety are reserved, in a release of the principal, this is to be construed as not extinguishing the remedy against the surety, but merely as a covenant not to sue the principal.²

§ 832. Each joint debtor is liable for the full amount of the joint debt,³ and on judgment being entered against all jointly, as the nature of the contract requires, the full amount of the judgment may be levied against any one of the joint debtors singly.⁴ It is so, also, in equity practice.⁵ Upon the death of one joint debtor, the survivor becomes exclusively liable, and the estate of the deceased debtor is relieved;⁶ and this is the case with regard to the liability of joint shareholders in a company.⁷ The rule is the same in equity as in law,⁸ though where the facts of the case show that the liability was meant to be several as well as joint, the estate of a deceased joint debtor may be held bound.⁹ And parol evidence is admissible to show that such was the understanding of the parties, and that the indebtedness was made joint instead of

Each joint debtor liable for the whole, but on death liability pursues survivors.

Graham *ex parte*, 5 De G. M. & G. 356; Farmers & Mech. Bk. v. Rathbone, 26 Vt. 19; Garey v. Hignutt, 32 Md. 552.

¹ Evans v. Bremridge, 2 Kay & J. 174; Pearl v. Deacon, 1 De G. & J. 461; Breese v. Schuler, 48 Ill. 329.

² Green v. Wynn, L. R. 7 Eq. 28; 4 Ch. Ap. 204.

³ *Supra*, §§ 824 *et seq.*; Bac. Ab. Oblig. D.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 450; Bird v. Randall, 1 W. Bl. 388; Abbot v. Smith, 2 W. Bl. 949.

⁵ Land Credit Co. v. Fermoy, L. R. 5 Ch. 323.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 450; Dicey, *ut supra*, 237; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 58; Richards v. Heather, 1 B. & Ald. 29;

Calder v. Rutherford, 3 B. & B. 302; Enys v. Donnithorne, 2 Burr. 1196; Sumner v. Powell, 2 Mer. 30; Foster v. Hooper, 2 Mass. 572; Gere v. Clark, 6 Hill, N. Y. 350; Hoskinson v. Eliot, 62 Penn. St. 393; Neal v. Gilmore, 79 Penn. St. 421; Waters v. Riley, 2 Har. & G. 305; Atwell v. Milton, 4 Hen. & M. 253; Poole v. McLeod, 1 Sm. & M. 391. That this does not obtain in Indiana, see Eldred v. Bank, 71 Ind. 543.

⁷ Maria Anna Coal Co. *in re*, L. R. 20 Eq. 585.

⁸ *Ibid.*; Simpson v. Vaughan, 2 Atk. 31.

⁹ Prior v. Hembrow, 8 M. & W. 873.

joint and several by mutual mistake.¹ And in most jurisdictions in this country, the exclusive liability of survivors is done away with by statute.²—In Pennsylvania, where the survivor is insolvent or bankrupt before suit brought, the executor of the solvent deceased party may at common law be proceeded against.³—As is elsewhere seen,⁴ a surety who pays a joint debt may come down on the estate of a deceased fellow-surety for contribution.

§ 833. The omission of a joint promisor, as a defendant, can at common law be taken advantage of by plea in abatement.⁵ Should the defendant go to trial on the merits, he cannot defend on the ground that others, jointly bound with himself, were not sued.⁶ Thus, where on a bill of exchange drawn upon and accepted by four persons, only three were sued, it was held that the suit could be maintained, although the declaration averred the bill to be drawn upon and accepted only by those who were sued.⁷ But a joint subsisting liability of all parties charged in the pleading must be shown at common law, or

Omission of joint promisor only matter for plea in abatement.

¹ Leake, 3d ed. 451; 1 Story, Eq. Jur. §§ 162 *et seq.*; Beresford v. Brown-
ing, L. R. 1 C. D. 30; Thorpe v. Jack-
son, 2 Y. & C. 553; see Harrison v.
Barton, 30 L. J. Ch. 213; Hunt v.
Rousmanier, 8 Wheat. 211; Yorks v.
Peck, 14 Barb. 644.

² See Bachelder v. Fiske, 17 Mass.
464; Curtis v. Mansfield, 11 Cush.
152; Taylor v. Taylor, 5 Humph. 110;
Davis v. Wilkinson, 1 Hayw. 334.

³ Lang v. Keppeler, 1 Binn. 123.

⁴ *Infra*, § 835; *supra*, § 765.

⁵ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 53; Rice
v. Shute, 1 Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed.
870; Cabell v. Vaughan, 1 Wms.
Saund. 291; Winslow v. Merrill, 2
Fairf. 127; Nash v. Skinner, 12 Vt.
219; Ziele v. Campbell, 2 John. Ca.
382; Seymour v. Minturn, 17 Johns.
169; Williams v. Allen, 7 Cow. 316;
Burgess v. Abbott, 6 Hill, 135; Mer-
shon v. Hobensack, 2 Zab. 373;
Witmer v. Schlatter, 15 S. & R. 150;

2 Rawle, 359; Horton v. Cook, 2
Watts, 40; Potter v. McCoy, 26 Penn.
St. 458; Means v. Milliken, 33 Penn.
St. 517; Bledsoe v. Irvin, 35 Ind. 293;
Moore v. Russell, 2 Bibb, 442; Hen-
derson v. Hammond, 19 Ala. 340. See,
also, Barry v. Foyles, 1 Pet. 317, over-
ruling on this point, Jordon v. Wil-
kins, 3 Wash. C. C. 110.

⁶ Dicey, *ut supra*, 231; Richards v.
Heather, 1 B. & Ald. 35; Cross v.
Williams, 7 H. & N. 675; King v.
Hoare, 13 M. & W. 505; Barry v.
Foyles, 1 Peters, 317; Powers v. Spear,
3 N. H. 35; Hicks v. Cram, 17 Vt. 449;
Elder v. Thompson, 13 Gray, 91. That
a variance may be taken advantage of
on special demurrer, see Burgess v.
Abbott, 1 Hill, N. Y. 135, where it was
held that the objection could not be
taken advantage of on general de-
murrer.

⁷ Mountstephen v. Brooks, 1 B. &
Ald. 224.

there can be no recovery.¹ Now, however, under the enlarged liberty of amendment introduced by recent legislation, variances of this class can be relieved by amendment of declaration or writ, and the questions just noticed are no longer liable to occur.²

§ 834. If too many persons be made joint defendants, and this fact appear on the pleadings, this, at common law, is fatal on demurrer, or arrest of judgment, or writ of error.³ The recovery, when a joint debt is averred, must be against all or none, unless one or more of the defendants is removed from the record by setting up a purely individual defence, such as infancy or bankruptcy.⁴

Misjoinder
if una-
mended is
fatal.

¹ Tuttle v. Cooper, 10 Pick. 281; Walcott v. Canfield, 3 Conn. 194; Livingston v. Tremper, 11 Johns. 101. In Gilman v. Rives, 10 Pet. 298, it was held that in suits on recognizances, and obligations of record, where one is sued, and the declaration shows that another is justly bound, this is fatal on demurrer or arrest, if the plaintiff does not aver that the other party is dead; though a distinction is suggested between records and deeds.—In Virginia, this rule has been applied to suits on bonds; Newell v. Wood, 1 Munf. 555; Newman v. Graham, 3 Munf. 189; and in Maine, to suits on promissory notes. Harwood v. Roberts, 5 Greenl. 441; S. P., Needham v. Heath, 17 Vt. 224; see McGregor v. Balch, 17 Vt. 563; see, however, *contra*, Neally v. Moulton, 12 N. H. 485; Harrow v. Dugan, 6 Dana, 341; McCreery v. Davis, 9 B. Mon. 128. In Lillard v. Bank, 3 How. Mis. 78, it was said that if it appear from the record that the other contracting party was alive, the defendant may demur, but not otherwise; see Geddis v. Hawk, 10 S. & R. 33, and discussion in 1 Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 874; in which work (p. 875), after a careful survey of older American cases, it is said: "These opinions are so discordant

and uncertain, that they cannot be considered as overthrowing a principle so clearly founded in reason, as that where a joint liability appears on the declaration in a suit against one, the non-joinder is fatal on general demurrer or in arrest of judgment. There are some cases in which the non-joinder of a joint contractor cannot be taken advantage of in any way whatever. Thus, though it seems to be assumed in the principal case (*Rice v. Shute*), that the non-joinder of a secret partner might be ground of a plea in abatement; and was, indeed, afterwards so decided in *Dubois v. Ludert*, 5 Taunt. 609; yet the case was soon disregarded in practice, and at last solemnly overruled: *Mullet v. Hook*, 1 M. & Mal. 88; *De Mantort v. Saunders*, 1 B. & Ad. 398; and, therefore, if issue be joined upon a plea in abatement of non-joinder, the jury are directed to consider *with whom had the plaintiff reason to believe that he contracted.*"

² Leake, 2d ed. 450.

³ Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 51; *Shirreff v. Wilks*, 1 East, 52; *Max v. Roberts*, 12 East, 94; *Cooper v. Whitehouse*, 6 C. & P. 545; *Whiting v. Cook*, 8 Allen, 63.

⁴ *Peebles v. Rand*, 43 N. H. 337; *Tuttle v. Cooper*, 10 Pick. 281; *Wal-*

§ 835. Supposing there be no agreement limiting their contributions, each joint debtor, who pays more than his share of the indebtedness, may call upon the others to contribute their proportionate shares.¹ Such payment, however, to entitle the party making it to recover from his co-debtors, must not be merely voluntary;² though it is not necessary, if the party paying was bound to pay, that he should have waited till judgment was entered against him.³

Joint debtor, paying more than his share, may recover from others.

IV. ASSIGNEES.

§ 836. The English common law, on grounds which it is not necessary here to discuss, does not permit the assignee of a contract to sue in his own name, though he is permitted to sue in the name of his assignor.⁴ Coke says the object was to discourage maintenance. Mr. Pollock regards the rule, and I think correctly, as “a logical consequence of the primitive view of a contract as creating a strictly personal obligation between the debtor and the creditor.”⁵ In equity the right of the assignee to sue in his own name, was recognized at an early period; and the

Assignee by modern practice may sue.

cott v. Canfield, 3 Cow. 194; *Jenkins v. Hunt*, 2 Rand. 446.

¹ *Kemp v. Finden*, 12 M. & W. 421; *Browne v. Lee*, 6 B. & C. 689; *Edger v. Knapp*, 6 Scott, N. R. 707; *Alexander v. Vane*, 1 M. & W. 511; *Boulton v. Peplow*, 9 C. B. 493; *Fletcher v. Grover*, 11 N. H. 368; *Taylor v. Savage*, 12 Mass. 98; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 264; *Campbell v. Mesier*, 4 John. Ch. 334; *Doremus v. Selden*, 19 Johns. 213; *Smith v. Hicks*, 1 Wend. 206; see *Murray v. Bogart*, 14 Johns. 318. That co-debtors are entitled to contribution, see *supra*, § 765; and see on this topic 1 Pars. on Cont. 32 *et seq.*

² *Lucas v. Ins. Co.*, 6 Cow. 635, and cases cited *supra*, § 765.

³ *Davies v. Humphreys*, 6 M. & W. 153; *Pitt v. Pursford*, 8 M. & W. 538; *Odlin v. Greenleaf*, 3 N. H. 270; *Chaffee v. Jones*, 19 Pick. 260; *Frith v.*

Sprague, 14 Mass. 455. See *supra*, § 760, for other cases.

⁴ See *Pollock*, 3d ed. 224; *Wolff v. Oxholm*, 6 M. & S. 99; *Winchester v. Hackley*, 2 Cranch, 342; *Guthrie v. White*, 1 Dall. 268.

⁵ To the same effect is 2 Spence's Eq. Jur. 850. See *Koch, Forderungen*, 8, 348.—“The rule that a chose in action cannot be assigned, means in effect that no one can transfer to another the right to bring an action for such a claim in the name of the transferee or assignee. This holds good, whether the right to bring an action be only what may be called a possible right of action, such as A. has against X. the moment a contract is entered into by X. with him; or an actual right of action, such as A. has against X. when X. has broken a contract with A. or has done a wrong to A. Hence, the rule may

English judicature act of 1873, "creates a legal right modelled on the equitable right, but confined to cases where the assignment is absolute, and by writing under the hand of the assignor, and express notice in writing has been given to the debtor."¹ Independently of this provision, an assignee, in England, is empowered by statute to sue in his own name on

thus be stated: A. cannot transfer or assign to B. the right to sue X., so as to enable B. to sue X. in B.'s name, either on a contract made with A. or for a tort done to A." Dicey on Parties (Am. ed. 1879), 67. But "this nicety is not now so regarded as to render (an assignment) really ineffectual. It is, on the contrary, in substance, a valid and constant practice, although in accordance with the ancient principle, the form of assigning a chose in action is in the nature of a declaration of trust, and an agreement to permit the assignee to make use of the name of the assignor, in order to recover the possession. And, therefore, where in common acceptance a debt or bond is said to be assigned over, it must still be sued in the original creditor's name, for the bringing of which suit the person to whom it is transferred has sufficient authority." 2 Steph. Com. 6th ed. 45, 46; cited Dicey, *ut supra*, 69; Gibson v. Cooke, 20 Pick. 17.—By the Roman law the assignment of a debt was not permitted. Micklenbruch, *Lehre von der Cession der Forderungsrechte*, 3 Auf. 1836; Schmid, *Grundlehren der Cession*, 1866; Puchte, in Weiske's *Rechts-Lex.* II. 636; Unterholzner, I. 598; Vangerow, III. §§ 574-6; Windscheid, II. § 329. The reason given is that the intrusion of a new creditor changes the character of the duty arising from the debtor, and gives the contract a new quality. There is no such thing, so it was argued, as a contract to pay money without a dis-

tinctive payee, whose characteristics qualify the obligation. To strike out one payee and put in another, is to establish a new contract, requiring the consent of both parties. If a creditor, therefore, according to the old Roman law, wished to make over a debt due him to a third party, he could only do so by granting the use of his name to such third party. The "assignee" in such case is not an ordinary "procurator," but a procurator "in rem suam." This limitation, however, was not permanently applied. In the course of time, to adopt Windscheid's exposition (Wind. § 329), it became the general practice for the assignee to sue in his own name. The *actio*, to adopt the terms finally accepted, was *suo nomine*, but at the same time was an *actio utilis*, not *directa*. The principle that the *obligatio* continued to belong to the original creditor was adhered to; the change was that the *actio* to enforce this obligation, as well as the fruits of the obligation, were given to the assignee. This distinction, however, is no longer recognized in the modern Roman law, by which an assignee of a debt has the same *jus* as his assignor.

That a creditor cannot, without his debtor's consent, assign a part of his claim, see *Beardslee v. Morgnor*, 73 Mo. 22. As to divisibility see *supra*, §§ 233, 338, 511, 552; *infra*, §§ 899, 979.

¹ Pollock, 3d ed. 225. See *Fairlie v. Denton*, 8 B. & C. 395; *Master v. Miller*, 4 T. R. 340; *Seddon v. Senate*, 13 East, 73; *McKinney v. Alvis*, 14 Ill. 33.

“promissory notes, bills of lading, bail bonds, replevin bonds, administration bonds, life and marine policies of insurance, and choses in action belonging to companies within the company act.”¹ Similar legislation exists in most jurisdictions in the United States. Generally, also, bills of exchange and promissory notes are assignable by custom;² but there must be an acceptance of bills to charge the acceptor, and “the holder of a cheque cannot maintain an action in his own name against the drawees, though they have sufficient funds of the drawer, if they refuse to accept it.”³ It is also to be remembered that “the assignment of a debt may be effected in law so as to give a right of action to the assignee by means of a binding agreement between the assignor, the assignee, and the debtor, to the effect that the debt shall be discharged as against the assignor or original creditor, and a new liability created for the debt in favor of the assignee.”⁴—At law, therefore, the old rule exists mainly in reference to sealed obligations, and to non-accepted drafts or orders, while in equity it has ceased to exist.⁵—In some states in this country, by statute, assignees are entitled in all cases to sue in their own names.⁶

§ 837. An assignment of a *chose in action* in itself implies a right to use the assignor's name. Hence after such an assignment, in states where the assignee cannot sue in his own name, he can sue in the name of the assignor.⁷ Want of interest in the nominal plaintiff cannot be shown to defeat the suit.⁸ Nor does it make any difference whether the chose in action is a

Assign-
ment au-
thorizes
use of as-
signor's
name.

¹ Dicey, *ut supra*, 117.

² *Ibid.*

³ Trunkey, J., *Saylor v. Bushong*, 12 Weekly Notes, 81, citing *Bank of the Republic v. Millard*, 10 Wall. 152; *Carr v. Bank*, 107 Mass. 45; See *Ætna Bank v. Nat. Bank*, 46 N. Y. 82.

⁴ Leake, 607, adopted in Dicey, *ut supra*, 118; *infra*, § 852.

⁵ 2 Story's Eq. Jur. § 1040 *et seq.*

⁶ See Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 17; *Aldricks v. Higgins*, 16 S. & R. 212; *Cox v. Hill*, 6 Md. 274; *Prioleau v. Bank*, 16 Ga. 582; *Smith v. Schibel*, 19 Mo. 140; *Mills v. Murry*, 1 Neb. 327;

Worthington v. Curd, 15 Ark. 491. In New Jersey, the assignment must be for a valuable consideration. *Andrews v. Rue*, 34 N. J. L. 402.

⁷ *Supra*, § 526; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 17; *Winchester v. Hackley*, 2 Cranch, 342; *Smith v. Berry*, 18 Me. 122; *Hal-loran v. Whitcomb*, 43 Vt. 306; *Clark v. Swift*, 3 Met. 392; *Parkhurst v. Dick-erson*, 21 Pick. 307; *Moore v. Coughlin*, 4 Allen, 335; *Lyon v. Summers*, 7 Conn. 399; *Jessel v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Hill, 88; *Norris v. Douglass*, 2 South. 817; *McKinney v. Alvis*, 14 Ill. 33.

⁸ *Raymond v. Johnson*, 11 Johns. 488.

written or parol contract, or an express or implied promise.¹ Whenever the assignment is valid, the assignee can sue in his assignor's name, if not in his own. In suits on insurance policies the assignor's name need not be used. "Upon an order, endorsed on the policy, to pay in case of loss to a third party, accepted by the company, or assented to by them, the payee may maintain an action, in his own name, on setting out the facts in his declaration."²

§ 838. From what has been just said, the distinction between assignability and negotiability is marked. If a promissory note be made by X. payable to A. or order, and A. endorses it to D., D. is entitled to recover from X. without proof of consideration. If the suit were on an assignment instead of an endorsement, it would be necessary for the plaintiff to prove, (1) consideration, and (2), the fact that notice of the assignment had been given by him to the debtor. Negotiability excludes equities; assignability is subject to them. Negotiability gives the holder often a better title than the assignor, as where a *bona fide* holder takes a note tainted with fraud or gambling.³ But, supposing there be no notice cutting off subsequent transactions between the original debtor and the original creditor, the assignee stands in the original creditor's shoes.⁴

§ 839. No particular form is necessary, as a general rule, to constitute an assignment of a debt.⁵ When negotiable paper is payable to order, an endorsement is necessary to pass the title; but when payable to bearer, mere delivery is sufficient.⁶ An order by the creditor

¹ Clarke v. Thompson, 2 R. I. 146; Currier v. Hodgdon, 3 N. H. 82.

² May on Ins. 2d ed. § 447; Chamberlain v. Ins. Co., 55 N. H. 249; Barrett v. Ins. Co., 7 Cush. 75; Lowell v. Ins. Co., 8 Cush. 127; Loring v. Ins. Co., 8 Gray, 28; Hastings v. Ins. Co., 73 N. Y. 141; Hartford Ins. Co. v. Olcott, 97 Ill. 439; see *supra*, § 526.

³ Anson (Am. ed. 1880), 215, citing Conard v. Ins. Co., 1 Pet. 386; Peters v. Balistier, 3 Pick. 495.

⁴ As to negotiable paper, see *supra*, § 795; as to bills of lading, see *supra*, § 793; that outside of these exceptions a party without title cannot pass title see *supra*, §§ 292, 734, 793.

⁵ 2 Story Eq. Jur. §§ 1043 *et seq.*; Ryall v. Rowles, 1 Ves. 348; Morton v. Naylor, 1 Hill, N. Y. 583.

⁶ Jones v. Witter, 13 Mass. 307; Freeman v. Perry, 22 Conn. 617; see *supra*, § 795.

of any kind (unless there be a statutory limitation) will carry the debt, if properly served on the debtor. The first essential is that the order should be from the creditor to whom the debt is payable.¹ Nor is it any longer necessary that the assignment should be by an instrument of the same solemnity as that which secured the original debt.² It is enough if there be a transfer of the security, with directions to the debtor to pay to the assignee.

§ 840. In equity, and now at law in England and in those states which have adopted equity practice in common law procedure, it is not necessary, in order to enable the assignee to sue in his own name, that the debtor should assent to the assignment.³ Nor is the debtor's assent necessary to the assignment of negotiable paper, or to assignments in the other excepted cases noticed.⁴ But wherever the suit is brought in the assignee's name, then (outside of these and other excepted cases) it is necessary, to sustain the suit, that there should be a contractual relation established between the debtor and the assignee.⁵ But, as has been already seen,

Debtor's
assent con-
stitutes
contractual
relation.

¹ *Rodick v. Gandell*, 1 D. M. & G. 763.

² *Porter v. Bullard*, 26 Me. 448; *Dennis v. Twitchell*, 10 Met. 180.

³ See *Bell v. R. R.*, 15 Beav. 548; *Spring v. Ins. Co.*, 8 Wheat. 268; *McKinney v. Alvis*, 14 Ill. 33.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 795 *et seq.*

⁵ *Williams v. Everett*, 14 East, 582; *Mandeville v. Welch*, 5 Wheat. 277; *Tiernan v. Jackson*, 5 Pet. 597; *Saylor v. Bushong*, cited *supra*, § 836.

Whether the original creditor can revoke the assignment, after a mere notice to the debtor, has been much discussed. On the principle stated in the text (*supra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*), it is essential, to establish a binding contractual relation, that the parties to such relation should concur in the specific agreement. If it is intended that the indebtedness of C. to A. should be extinguished, and an indebtedness

from C. to B. is to take its place, A., B., and C. should concur in the contract by which this intention is carried out. See *Wilson v. Coupland*, 5 B. & Al. 228; *Wharton v. Walker*, 4 B. & C. 164; *Owen v. Bowen*, 4 C. & P. 93; *Mowry v. Todd*, 12 Mass. 284; *Gibson v. Cooke*, 20 Pick. 15; *Pickens v. Hathaway*, 100 Mass. 247; and other cases cited Story on Cont. § 483. That the agreement between a substituted debtor and an original debtor may be rescinded at any time before the acceptance of the substitution by the original creditor, see *Trimble v. Strother*, 25 Oh. St. 378; *Durham v. Bischoff*, 47 Ind. 211.

In *Owen v. Bowen*, 4 C. & P. 93, where D. deposited with B. money to be paid to C., it was held that unless C. had agreed with D. and B., either directly or indirectly, D. could recover the amount of the deposit from B. On the other hand, it has been held that

the nature of the transaction may be such as to imply assent beforehand to any assignment the creditor may make; in other words, the debtor may make the creditor his agent to convey his (the debtor's) assent to an assignment by the creditor.¹ And, in any view, the debtor's assent may constitute a contractual relation between the debtor and the assignee.² Such assent may be inferred from the acts of the parties and the circumstances of the case.³ A banker, for instance, who knowingly retains money left by a depositor to meet a particular cheque, may be inferred to have assented to the negotiability of the cheque, and becomes, therefore, liable to the holder.⁴—If it be said that the extension in this way of the right of assignees to sue militates against the principle heretofore announced that no one should become my creditor without my assent, the answer may be repeated, that the case of an assignee suing me on an indebtedness to which I consented is very different from that of a volunteer creditor suing me on a debt to which I gave no assent at all. The first is an incident to a contract which I instituted; the second is the imposition on me of a contract with which I have had nothing at all to do.⁵—Wherever there has been a promise by the defendant, then, on the principles of novation, there being an adequate consideration, suit may be brought by the assignee independent of the statutes.⁶

§ 841. As has been elsewhere shown,⁷ the question whether

the debtor's assent is sufficient to destroy the right of the original creditor to revoke the deposit. *Weston v. Barker*, 12 Johns. 281; *Neilson v. Blight*, 1 Johns. Cas. 205; and other cases cited *Story on Cont.* § 483. But at common law, aside from statute, the original contract can only be destroyed by mutual consent.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 836 *et seq.*; *Israel v. Douglass*, 1 H. Bl. 242; *Crocker v. Whitney*, 10 Mass. 316.

² *Tibbits v. George*, 5 Ad. & El. 115; *De Bernales v. Fuller*, 14 East, 590 n; *Warren v. Wheeler*, 21 Me. 484; *Mowry*

v. Todd, 12 Mass. 281; *Story on Cont.* § 471.

³ *Doty v. Wilson*, 14 John. 378; *Barger v. Collins*, 7 Har. & J. 213.

⁴ *Saylor v. Bushong*, 12 Weekly Notes, 81; see *Tibbits v. George*, 5 Ad. & El. 115; *Carrier v. Hodgdon*, 3 N. H. 32; *Edson v. Fuller*, 22 N. H. 191; *Crocker v. Whitney*, 10 Mass. 316; *Doty v. Wilson*, 14 Johns. 378; *Commercial Bank v. Hughes*, 17 Wend. 94.

⁵ *Supra*, § 787.

⁶ *Infra*, § 852; *Cromelien v. Manger*, 17 Penn. St. 169; *De Barry v. Withers*, 44 Penn. St. 356.

⁷ *Wh. Con. of L.* § 735; *supra*, § 796.

an assignment is formally valid is to be decided by the *lex fori*. It is a mere matter of process. If allowed by the *lex fori*, the assignee may sue in his own name, although forbidden by the foreign law to which the obligation is subject.¹ But if an assignee cannot, in such cases, sue by the *lex fori*, the fact that he could have sued under the *lex loci contractus*, will not relieve him from his disability.²—If the mode of assignment pointed out by a statute be not pursued, only an equitable interest vests in the assignee, and the suit must be by the assignor to his use.³—Mere endorsement of a certificate of deposit in a savings fund will not entitle the endorsee to bring suit in his own name.⁴—Whether paper is so far negotiable as to sustain a suit by the holder has been already considered.⁵

Lex fori determines whether assignee can sue in his own name.

§ 842. An assignee of non-negotiable assets takes only what the assignor has to give; and hence, whatever equities the debtor might assert against the assignor at the time of the assignment he can assert against the assignee.⁶ “That the purchasers of non-negotiable demands, like the certificate here (a certificate of

Assignment subject to equities between assignor and debtor

¹ *Foss v. Nutting*, 14 Gray, 484.

² *Supra*, § 526; *Fisk v. Brackett*, 32 Vt. 798; *Usher v. D'Wolf*, 13 Mass. 290; *McRae v. Mattoon*, 10 Pick. 49; *Hay v. Green*, 12 Cush. 282; *Leach v. Green*, 116 Mass. 536; see *Wolf v. Oxholm*, 6 M. & S. 99; *Folliott v. Ogden*, 1 H. Black. 131; *Jeffery v. M'Taggart*, 6 M. & S. 126; *Levy v. Levy*, 78 Penn. St. 507; *Murrell v. Jones*, 40 Miss. 565; *Tully v. Herrin*, 44 Miss. 626.

³ *Troub. & Haly Prac.* by Brightly, § 1664; *Bunting v. R. R.*, 81 Penn. St. 254; cited *supra*, § 797. In Massachusetts the only cases in which a third person has the exclusive right to the control of an action at law is when he has acquired the whole interest of the nominal plaintiff. *Coffin v. Adams*, 131 Mass. 133; citing *Foss v. Lowell Bank*, 111 Mass. 285.

⁴ *London Saving Fund v. Bank*, 36 Penn. St. 498; see *supra*, §§ 797, 836.

⁵ *Supra*, § 795.

⁶ *Wh. Con. of L.* §§ 364 *et seq.*; Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. (1879) 17; *Pollock*, 3d ed. 227-9; *Pinkett v. Wright*, 2 Hare, 120; *Murray v. Pinkett*, 12 Cl. & F. 784; *Ford v. White*, 16 Beav. 120; *Clack v. Holland*, 19 Beav. 262; *Littlefield v. Smith*, 17 Me. 327; *Bartlett v. Pearson*, 29 Me. 9, 15; *Dix v. Cobb*, 4 Mass. 508; *Clarke v. Hawkins*, 5 R. I. 219; *Aldrich v. Campbell*, 4 Gray, 284; *Vanbuskirk v. Ins. Co.*, 14 Conn. 141; *Murray v. Lylburn*, 2 Johns. Ch. 441; *Noble v. Oil Co.*, 76 Penn. St. 354; *Sharts v. Awalt*, 73 Ind. 304; *Ellis v. Sisson*, 96 Ill. 105; see *Paine v. Lester*, 44 Conn. 196; *Pond v. Cooke*, 45 Conn. 130; and other cases cited *Wh. Con. of L.* §§ 334 *et seq.* 359, and see for further cases, *infra*, §§ 1021 *et seq.*

indebtedness by a duly constituted public officer) from others than the original owner of them, can take only such rights as he has parted with, except when by his acts he is estopped from asserting his original claim, is established by all the authorities."¹ "Where there is a *chose in action*, whether it is a debt, or an obligation, or a trust fund, and it is assigned, the person who holds the debt or obligation, or has undertaken to hold the trust fund, has, as against the assignee, exactly the same equities that he would have as against the assignor."² After assignment debts due by the assignee to the defendant may be set off.³ The assignee of a debt is, therefore, put in the same position as is an undisclosed principal suing on a debt contracted by his agent. He is entitled to recover, but whatever he recovers is subject to any set-off or counter-claim due from the debtor to the creditor in the original transaction. The assignee takes the debt burdened with such set-offs or counter-claims.⁴ If, also, the claim is open to avoidance, when held by the assignor, the debtor can avoid it to the same extent when it is in the hands of the assignee.⁵ When, however, a claim is *bona fide* assigned for a sufficient consideration, and notice of this is given to the

¹ Field, J., *Cowdrey v. Vandenburg*, 101 U. S. 575. That such an assignment may be of a future contingent interest (*e. g.* of a policy of life insurance), see *Phipps v. Lovegrove*, L. R. 16 Eq. 80; see to same effect *Ingraham v. Disbrough*, 47 N. Y. 421; *Davis v. Bechstein*, 69 N. Y. 440.

² James, L. J., *Phipps v. Lovegrove*, L. R. 16 Eq. 80, 86; S. P., Lord St. Leonards, *Mangler v. Dixon*, 3 H. L. C. 702; *Gochenauer v. Cooper*, 8 S. & R. 187; *Faull v. Tinsman*, 36 Penn. St. 108; *Finnell v. Nesbit*, 16 B. Mon. 351; and see *Morrow v. Bright*, 20 Mo. 298. *Pickering v. R. R.*, L. R. 3 C. P. 235, holds that "a creditor of A. who becomes entitled by operation of law to appropriate any beneficial interest of A.'s (whether an equitable interest in

property or a right of action) for the satisfaction of his debt, can claim nothing more than such interest as A. actually had, and he can gain no priority by notice to A.'s trustee or debtor even in cases where he might have gained it if A. had made an express and unqualified assignment to him." This decision is stated by Mr. Pollock (3d ed. 229) to virtually overrule *Watts v. Porter*, 3 E. & B. 743.

³ *Infra*, §§ 1020 *et seq.*

⁴ *Cavendish v. Geaves*, 24 Beav. 163; *Mitchell v. Winslow*, 2 Story, 630; *Hooper v. Brundage*, 22 Me. 460; *Trustees v. Wheeler*, 61 N. Y. 88; *Wood v. Mayer*, 73 N. Y. 556; *Metzgar v. Metzgar*, 1 Rawle, 227; see *infra*, § 1025.

⁵ *Graham v. Johnson*, L. R. 8 Eq. 36.

debtor, then any payment by him to the assignor will be regarded as collusive and inoperative.¹

§ 843. It is elsewhere shown that three theories have been advanced as to the law to which a debt is subject: 1, that of the *lex loci contractus*; 2, that of the debtor's domicile; and, 3, that of the creditor's domicile.² The prevailing and better theory is that the law of the creditor's domicile is to control.³ But so far as concerns the form and practice of set-off, the *lex fori* decides.⁴

Equities to be determined by the law to which the debt is subject.

§ 844. To enable the original debtor to set off against the assignee a debt due the original assignor the debt must be due at the time of the assignment.⁵ In other words, none but actionable debts can be set off.⁶ Hence no set-off acquired against the assignor, after notice of the assignment, is good against the assignee.⁷ Nor will a release by the assignor, or any other hostile action on his part, after due notice has been given, affect the assignee's claim.⁸

Set-off must be due at time of assignment.

¹ See *Stephens v. Venables*, 30 Beav. 625; *Watson v. R. R.*, L. R. 2 C. P. 593.

² Wh. Con. of L. §§ 360 *et seq.*

³ *Smith v. Buchanan*, 1 East, 6; *Caskie v. Webster*, 2 Wal. Jr. 131; *Braynard v. Marshall*, 8 Pick. 194; *Mead v. Dayton*, 28 Conn. 33; *Clark v. Peat Co.*, 35 Conn. 303; *Pond v. Cooke*, 45 Conn. 132; *Goodwin v. Holbrook*, 4 Wend. 377; *Guillander v. Howell*, 35 N. Y. 657; *Speed v. May*, 17 Penn. St. 91; *Poe v. Duck*, 5 Md. 1; *Keyser v. Rice*, 47 Md. 203; *Klein v. French*, 57 Miss. 662. In *Kirtland v. Hotchkiss*, 100 U. S. 491, Harlan, J., speaking of a debt due from a person domiciled in one state to a person domiciled in another, said: "That debt, although a species of intangible property, may, for the purposes of taxation, if not for all others, be regarded as situated at the domicile of the creditor."

⁴ *Supra*, § 841; *infra*, §§ 1009 *et seq.*

⁵ *Infra*, §§ 1021-5. As to release,

see *infra*, § 1038. *Hutchinson v. Reed*, 3 Camp. 329; *Gledstane's case*, L. R. 1 Ch. 538; *Rawley v. Rawley*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 460; *Avery v. Russell*, 125 Mass. 571; *Martin v. Kuntzmuller*, 37 N. Y. 396; *Roberts v. Carter*, 38 N. Y. 107; *Fuller v. Steiglitz*, 27 Oh. St. 355; *Williams v. Helme*, 1 Dev. Eq. 151.

⁶ *Infra*, § 1017.

⁷ *Winch v. Keeley*, 1 T. R. 619; *Weeks v. Hunt*, 6 Vt. 15; *Blake v. Buchanan*, 22 Vt. 548; *Halloran v. Whitcomb*, 43 Vt. 306; *Upton v. Moore*, 44 Vt. 552; *Dix v. Cobb*, 4 Mass. 508; *Goodwin v. Cunningham*, 12 Mass. 193; *Bush v. Lathrop*, 22 N. Y. 535; *Roberts v. Carter*, 38 N. Y. 107. See, also, *Greene v. Darling*, 5 Mason, 201; *Bartlett v. Pearson*, 29 Me. 9; *Willis v. Twambly*, 13 Mass. 204.

⁸ *Alner v. George*, 1 Camp. 392; *Dix v. Cobb*, 4 Mass. 508; see *Webb v. Steele*, 13 N. H. 230.

§ 845. To protect the assignee it is proper that notice should be given of the assignment to the debtor. If he should pay innocently, without notice, the original creditor, after the assignment, however fraudulent the reception of the money may be on the part of the original creditor, the payment will preclude a recovery by the assignee from the debtor on the same debt.¹ The same protection is given to the debtor should he pay *bona fide* to the assignee of whose assignment he is first informed.²—By the Roman law, prevailing in Scotland, an assignment does not operate until notice to the debtor, and an attachment after the assignment, but prior to notice to the debtor, overrides the assignment. By the English law, the assignment, so it has been held, works an equitable transfer of the debt as against attaching creditors without notice. It has been held in England that if a debt due by a Scotch debtor to an English creditor be assigned in England, the debt is equitably transferred to the assignee as against a subsequent Scotch attaching creditor, though the notice to the debtor of the assignment was not given until after attachment laid.³ It was subsequently held that the claims of competing assignees, incumbrances, and attaching creditors rank from the time of notice to the debtor;⁴ although, when local statutes give priority of attachments according to date of imposition, priority must be determined by the law of the creditor's domicile.⁵—It has been recently ruled in England that a second assignee who takes not from the original creditor, but from his legal personal representative,

¹ Pollock, 3d ed. 226; *Stocks v. Dobson*, 4 D. M. G. 11; *Felch v. Bugbee*, 48 Me. 9; *Adams v. Leavens*, 20 Conn. 73; *Heermans v. Ellsworth*, 64 N. Y. 159; *Hinkley v. Walter*, 8 Watts, 260; 9 Watts, 179; *Gaullagher v. Caldwell*, 22 Penn. St. 300; *Miller v. Bomberger*, 76 Penn. St. 78.

² *Stocks v. Dobson*, 4 D. M. G. 11, 17; see *Willes, J.*, L. R. 5 C. P. 594; and see generally *Pass v. MoRea*, 36 Miss. 143.

³ *Solomons v. Ross*, 1 H. Bl. 131, n.;

Sill v. Worswick, 1 H. Bl. 691; *Story*, *Con. of L.* §§ 395–6; and see comments in *Wh. Con. of L.* § 364.

⁴ *Loveridge v. Cooper*, 3 Russ. 1, 38, 48, and cases cited *Wald's Pollock*, 204; *Foster v. Cockerell*, 3 Cl. & F. 456; see *Judson v. Corcoran*, 17 How. 612; *Spain v. Hamilton*, 1 Wall. 604.

⁵ See *Braynard v. Marshall*, 8 Pick. 194; *Thayer v. Daniels*, 113 Mass. 129; *Muir v. Schenck*, 3 Hill, 228; *Guillander v. Howell*, 35 N. Y. 657.

may in like manner gain priority by notice.¹—The notice is to be given to the debtor either in person or through his agent employed by him to make payment;² and notice to one of two trustees is sufficient.³ No specific form is necessary for a notice. It is enough if the fact be put before the debtor in such a way as would lead a business man of ordinary prudence to take cognizance of it.⁴—So far as concerns the debtor, or his bankrupt assignee, if there be no conflict as to assignments or attachments, no notice is necessary.⁵

§ 846. It is open, however, to the parties to a contract to provide that in the hands of an assignee no set-off between the parties should be permitted.⁶ In law the debtor may preclude himself by means of estoppel from setting up a set-off or counter-claim,⁷ “which,” comments Mr. Pollock, “really comes to the same thing, the doctrine of estoppel being a more technical and definite expression of the same principle.”⁸ It has been consequently held that when there are transferable indentures

Parties may contract to assign free from equities.

¹ Freshfield's Trusts, L. R. 11 Ch. D. 198.

² Addison v. Cox, L. R. 8 Ch. 76–9.

³ Pardee v. Platt, 20 Conn. 402.

⁴ Lloyd v. Banks, L. R. 3 Ch. 488; Duncklee v. Mill Co., 3 Fost. 245. See generally as to necessity of notice, 2 Story's Eq. Jur. § 1047; Williams v. Sorrell, 4 Ves. 389; Mangles v. Dixon, 3 H. L. C. 702; Rodick v. Gandell, 1 D. M. & G. 763; Ward v. Morrison, 25 Vt. 595; Jones v. Witter, 13 Mass. 304; Commercial Bank v. Colt, 15 Barb. 506.

When a debt was due from a person domiciled in Connecticut to a person domiciled in Massachusetts, and this debt was attached in Connecticut by a creditor of the payee, and the payee, between laying the attachment and judgment thereon, made an assignment, the attachment was held in Connecticut to take the debt as against the assignment, although it would have been otherwise under the law of Massachusetts. Upton v. Hubbard, 28

Conn. 274; So. Boston Iron Works v. Locomotive Works, 51 Me. 585.

⁶ Burn v. Carvalho, 4 M. & Cr. 690; Freshfield's Trusts, L. R. 11 Ch. D. 198; Thayer v. Daniels, 113 Mass. 129; Muir v. Schenck, 3 Hill, 228; Spain v. Hamilton, 1 Wall. 604. With regard to foreign bankrupt assignments, see Wh. Con. of L. § 390.

⁷ Asiatic Banking Co. *ex parte*, L. R. 2 Ch. 391. In this case Lord Cairns said: “Generally speaking, a *chose in action* assignable only in equity must be assigned subject to the equities existing between the original parties to the contract; but this is a rule which must yield when it appears from the nature of the terms of the contract that it must have been intended to be assignable free and unaffected by such equities.” See *supra*, §§ 141, 795–797.

⁸ Webb v. Herne Bay, L. R. 5 Q. B. 642; § 796–7.

⁹ Pollock, 3d ed. 231.

subject to such limitation, the holder takes them free from any equities between the original parties. And a limitation to this effect has been held to exist where, in pursuance of an antecedent agreement, debentures are issued, payable to the holder or bearer,¹ and where the debenture is put in the form of negotiable paper.² But this implication does not arise merely from the fact that the debenture is made payable to holder or bearer.³—That such debentures are issued in blocks, consisting of a series separately numbered, and that the object of the issue was to raise money in the market, are ingredients in determining the question whether the issuer of the debentures has estopped himself from setting up equities personal to himself against the holder.⁴ But in England the original parties to such debentures cannot turn them permanently into negotiable instruments by an agreement that the debts of the original creditor should not be set off against any subsequent assignee. This agreement does not by its own force operate to enable an intermediate holder against whom equities exist to transfer a title free from such equities.⁵

§ 847. A party, also, taking an order for the delivery of goods, takes it free from any equities existing between the original parties to the contract, whenever this was the understanding between such parties. And the rule applies to all securities or vouchers for a debt payable in money.⁶

§ 848. When the assignee of an executory contract can perform the duty imposed by it as effectively as could the assignor, the fact that this duty is personal cannot be set up

¹ *New Zealand Co. ex parte*, L. R. 3 Ch. 154; see *Colborne ex parte*, L. R. 11 Eq. 478; *Crouch v. Credit Foncier*, L. R. 8 Q. B. 374; see *Railroad Co. v. Howard*, 7 Wall. 392, where this inference is doubted as a universal rule. *Ex. 387; Universal Life Asso. Co.*, L. R. 10 Eq. 458; *Chorley ex parte*, L. R. 11 Eq. 157; and other cases cited Pollock, 3d ed. 233. Mr. Pollock doubts whether *Graham v. Johnson*, 8 Eq. 36, and *Athenæum Ass. v. Pooley*, 3 De G. & J. 294, can be reconciled with the above.

² *City Bank ex parte*, L. R. 3 Ch. 758.

³ *Crouch v. Credit Foncier*, L. R. 8 Q. B. 374.

⁴ *Financial Corporation's Claim*, L. R. 3 Ch. 154, and see *supra*, § 795-7.

⁵ *Merchant Bank v. Bessemer Steel Co.*, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 205.

⁶ *Dickson v. Swansea R. R.*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 44; *Higgs v. Tea Co.*, L. R. 4

by defendant in a suit by the assignor on the contract.¹ It is otherwise, however, when the duty, a condition precedent to the contract becoming effective, is one which can be performed only by the assignor, he declining to perform such duty.² Contracts of partnership, also, are not assignable;³ and so of contracts to perform professional services.⁴

To a suit on assignment it is a defence that assignor failed to perform condition precedent.

¹ *British Waggon Co. v. Lea*, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 149; *Roorbach v. North*, 6 Johns. Ch. 469; *Horner v. Wood*, 23 N. Y. 350; *Devlin v. Mayor*, 63 N. Y. 8, 16; *Parsons v. Woodward*, 22 N. J. L. 196; *Philadelphia v. Lockhardt*, 73 Penn. St. 211.

² See *supra*, § 323.

In *British Waggon Co. v. Lea*, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 149, Cockburn, C. J., giving the judgment of the court (Jan. 13, 1880), said: "We entirely concur in the principle on which the judgment in *Robson v. Drummond*, 2 B. & Ad. 303, rests, namely, that where a person contracts with another to do work and perform service, and it can be inferred that the person employed has been selected with regard to his individual skill, competency, or other personal qualification, the inability or unwillingness of the party so employed to perform the service is a sufficient answer to any demand by a stranger to the original contract of the performance of it by the other party, and entitles the latter to treat the contract as at an end, notwithstanding that the

person tendered to take the place of the contracting party may be equally well qualified to do the service. Personal performance is in such a case of the essence of the contract, which, consequently, cannot in its absence be enforced against an unwilling party. But the principle appears to us inapplicable in the present instance, inasmuch as we cannot suppose that in stipulating for the repair of these waggons by the company—a rough description of work which ordinary workmen conversant with the business would be perfectly able to execute—the defendant attached any importance to whether the repairs were done by the company, or by any one with whom the company might enter into a subsidiary contract to do the work."

³ *Lind. on Partner.* 492; *Pearce v. Chamberlain*, 2 Ves. Sen. 33; *supra*, § 323.

⁴ *Farren v. Wilson*, L. R. 4 C. P. 744; *Hayes v. Willis*, 4 Daly, 259, and cases cited *supra*, § 323; see on this topic Mr. Moak's note to 24 Eng. Rep. 241.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NOVATION.

Novation is the substitution of a new in the place of an old contract, § 852.

A new contract is essential to novation, § 853.

Consent of the creditor is essential, § 854.

And so of consent of other parties, § 855.

To novation points of change are immaterial, § 856.

Whether old agreement is extinguished depends on construction, § 857.

Must be consideration for agreement of substitution, § 858.

Only parties to a contract may sue or be sued on it, § 859.

Extinguishment may be by merger, § 860.

Novation may be proved by parol, § 861.

Novation applied to partnership, § 862.

Retiring partners not discharged by acceptance of new firm, § 863.

Insurance may devolve duties on assignee, § 864.

Novation within statute of frauds, § 865.

§ 852. NOVATION is the substitution of a new in the place of an old contract. The *novation* of a contract is distinguished from the *rectification* of a contract in this, that in rectification the old contract is restored by a correction of mistakes of expression, while in novation a new contract is created.¹ The efficacy of novation is primarily due to the action of the creditor. The creditor consents to the rescission of the old contract and the substitution of a new contract. Novation is to be distinguished, therefore, from release,² in the fact that it works not the

¹ Dig. 46, 2 Cod. 8, 42 de nova. et deleg. Several German treatises have appeared on this topic: Gneist, *die formellen Verträge* (1845); Fein, *Beiträge zu der Lehre von der Novation und Delegation* (1855); Kniess, *Einfluss der bedingten Novation auf die ursprüngliche Obligation* (1860); Römer, *die bedingte Novation* (1863); Salpius, *Novation und Delegation* (1864); Salkowski,

zur Lehre von der Novation (1866). It is discussed also by Vangerow, § 619, and Windscheid, § 353, on whom I chiefly rely for the distinctions in the text. An article on the topic in the text will be found in 3 Am. Law Reg. N. S. 65. Rectification, as distinguished from novation, is discussed *supra*, § 205.

² *Infra*, § 1031.

termination of the contractual relation, but a substitution of contracts; while it differs from rectification in the fact that the change it produces is not partial, but total. In every respect the new agreement starts fresh. It is not part old and part new. It is new throughout, and the obligations it creates emanate, as to time and place, from itself. So far as concerns our own distinctive law, any increment of security, passing from one party to another, no matter how slight, and no matter how largely it may be apparently outweighed by surrenders on the other side, will be sufficient to sustain the substitution.¹—Whether the novation is so far perfected as to relieve the original debtor depends in part on the terms of the first agreement, in part on those of the second. It may be that by the first agreement the original debtor is to be bound only as long as he retains certain property or bears certain relations to the original creditor; and if so there is a release of the original debtor on the happening of the contingency on which his indebtedness is to cease. Or it may be that by the second agreement the original debtor is expressly released. But in any view, novation, in its true sense, does not exist unless the old agreement is discharged and a new agreement executed to take its place.²

¹ *Supra*, §§ 516 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 853; *Leake*, 2d ed. 790. See comments by Lord Westbury in *Blundell's case*, reported in 7 London Law J. 772.

² "There may be in some cases a change of credit by agreement between the parties so as to transfer the liability from the original contracting party to another, or to one only of the original contracting parties." Ch. on Pl. 16th Am. ed. 55, citing *Evans v. Drummond*, 4 Esp. 91; *Tappen v. Martens*, 8 T. R. 451; *Gouthwaite v. Duckworth*, 12 East, 421.

That by consent of all parties the old agreement may be extinguished and a new agreement instituted in its place, see *Wilson v. Coupland*, 5 B. & Al. 228; *Evans v. Powis*, 1 Exch. 601; *Sard v. Rhodes*, 1 M. & W. 153; *Good v. Cheeseman*, 2 B. & Ad. 328; *Jenness*

v. Lane, 26 Me. 475; *Woodward v. Miles*, 24 N. H. 289; *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *Andrews v. Campbell*, 36 Oh. St. 361; *Flanagin v. Hambleton*, 54 Ind. 222; *Lister v. Clark*, 48 Iowa, 169; *Drake v. Hill*, 53 Iowa, 87; *Shaffer v. McKanna*, 24 Kan. 22; *Baker v. Frellson*, 32 La. An. 822. See *Morriss v. Harveys*, 75 Va. 726; and cases cited *infra*, §§ 853, 996, and see *Story Eq. Jur.* § 1355.

In *Wharton v. Walker*, 4 B. & C. 164, *Bayley, J.*, in a case of alleged substitution of a new debtor for an old, said: "If, by an agreement between the three parties, the plaintiff had undertaken to look to the defendant and not to his original debtor, that would have been binding, and the plaintiff might have maintained an action on the agreement; but in order to

A new contract essential to novation.

§ 853. Hence, the first essential to novation is the formation of a new contract. No particular form for this purpose is required in the Roman

give him that right of action there must have been an extinguishment of the intermediate debt."

In *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561, it was held that an agreement with a sufficient consideration to substitute a new contract in place of an old contract extinguishes the old contract, whether the new contract was ever performed or not.

In *Cadens v. Teasdale*, 53 Vt. 469, it was held that where, by agreement between the original debtor and creditor and a third party, the third party was accepted in the original debtor's place, the risk of the insolvency of the third party fell on the creditor. "The plaintiffs," said Taft, J., "having a claim against the defendant, agreed if the defendant would procure one Oliver, a debtor of the defendant, to give the plaintiffs his (Oliver's) note on four months' time, that they would take it in payment of so much of the defendant's account. The agreement was accepted and the contract consummated. At the time all the parties believed that Oliver was solvent. He was in fact insolvent, failing before the maturity of the note, and nothing was realized by the plaintiffs upon it. The plaintiffs now seek to recover of the defendant the original account. The question presented is, Upon whom was the risk of the insolvency of Oliver? In *Wainwright v. Webster*, 11 Vt. 576, the court say, that where the note of a third person is received in payment of a precedent debt, the risk of the insolvency of the maker is upon the party from whom the paper is received, unless there is an *express agreement* that the risk of the paper, in this respect, is to be the receiver's, or one is to be

implied from the facts and circumstances of the case. In the case at bar, the defendant, at the time of the transaction, had simply an account, the collection of which he could enforce *in presenti*. Upon application to Oliver for money with which to pay the plaintiffs, it was arranged between the parties that Oliver should give his note to the plaintiffs, and they should accept it in lieu of their claim against the defendant. The note was given and the right to enforce the collection of the defendant's debt against Oliver was suspended for the life of the note. We regard the transaction as a substitution of the debt against Oliver for the one against the defendant; and that it was the intention of the parties that the defendant should be discharged from his indebtedness, and from any claim on account of the insolvency of Oliver; from the facts and circumstances in the case, we think such was the intention. The taking of a note, either of the debtor or of a third person, upon an open account, is *prima facie* payment of such account, upon the presumption that such is the intention of the parties at the time. The intention of the parties upon the question presented in this case should be held as equally decisive, as upon the question of payment. Finding that it was the intention of the parties, from all the facts and circumstances of the transaction, that the risk of Oliver's insolvency should be borne by the plaintiffs, the case is brought within the exception to the general rule as stated by Bennett, J., in the case cited, and the result is affirmed."

law; no particular form is required in our own law, unless prescribed by the statute of frauds. The new contract, however, as we will presently see more fully, must be on a sufficient consideration. That consideration may, as a mere matter of abstract calculation, be more or it may be less than that of the contract which is superseded.¹ The old contract may appear superficially much more beneficial to the creditor than the new contract. A much less sum payable to-day may be taken instead of a much larger sum payable next week. A sum half the old amount with a new endorser may be accepted in the place of the old debt without that endorser. It is the element of time in the one case, and of a new security in the other case, that makes the consideration and counterbalances the diminution on the face of the debt.²—In our own law, novation of this class falls under the head of accord and satisfaction, and is subject to the same rules.³ No matter how slight may be the additional security, or how small the time gained, it is a sufficient consideration for the substitution of the new contract for the old. But to effect the novation,—in other words, to work this substitution—a valid contract must be made. When a new debtor comes in, the consideration, so far as concerns the creditor, is this new security, to the detriment of the new debtor; the consideration, so far as concerns the new debtor, is the detriment to the creditor arising from the withdrawal of the old debtor.⁴—The new contract, according to Roman law, may be one on which immediate legal process cannot be issued, as where the new debtor is a minor,⁵ or may be in other respects open to impeachment; yet if the old creditor accepts the novation in ignorance of such a defect, it being concealed from him, he is entitled to have the novation set aside, and a restitution of the old contract decreed.⁶ That the debt on the new contract may not be immediately payable does not, of itself, affect the

¹ See *infra*, § 858.² See Gneist, *op. cit.* 229.³ See *infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*⁴ See discussion in Windscheid, §354, and see as to consideration, *supra*, §§ 505 *et seq.*⁵ L. 1, § 1, D. h. t.⁶ See authorities in Windscheid, § 354.

validity of the novation.—“Qui in diem stipulatur, statim novat . . . cum certum sit, diem quandoque venturum”¹—“constat, et stipulatione in diem facta novationem contingere, sed non statim ex ea stipulatione agi posse, antequam dies venerit.”²—Nor is it any objection that the new contract is conditional.³ “At qui sub condicione stipulatur, non statim novat, nisi condicio extiterit.” And by the Roman law, the new agreement, when only vacating the old contract without instituting new obligations, is regarded as simply a release.⁴—Among the most conspicuous cases of novation in our own practice, are those which arise when a debtor selling property agrees with the purchaser and the creditor, that the purchaser is to be taken as debtor in his place. In other words, C., the creditor, agrees to take P., the purchaser of D.’s property, as debtor in place of D., the original debtor.⁵—As falling, also, under the head of novation, may be mentioned the line of cases hereafter discussed,⁶ where negotiable paper with a new name is accepted in satisfaction of an old debt.⁷

¹ L. 8, § 1, D. h. t.

² L. 5, eod.

³ L. 8, § 1.

⁴ Windscheid, § 354.

⁵ *Supra*, § 786 a; *Halsey v. Reed*, 9 Paige, 446; *Barker v. Bucklin*, 2 Denio, 45; *Dingeldein v. R. R.*, 37 N. Y. 575; *Campbell v. Smith*, 71 N. Y. 26; *Calvo v. Davies*, 73 N. Y. 211; *Girard Ins. Co. v. Stewart*, 86 Penn. St. 89; *Merriman v. Moore*, 90 Penn. St. 78; *Johnson v. Knapp*, 36 Iowa, 616; *Beasely v. Webster*, 64 Ill. 458; *Snell v. Ives*, 85 Ill. 279; *Ross v. Kennison*, 38 Iowa, 396; *McDowell v. Laev*, 35 Wis. 171; *Jordan v. White*, 20 Minn. 91; *Shaffer v. McKanna*, 24 Kan. 22; *Mason v. Hall*, 30 Ala. 599; *Meyer v. Lowell*, 44 Mo. 328; *Rogers v. Gosnell*, 58 Mo. 589; and cases cited *Wald’s Pollock*, 220; and other cases cited, *supra*, §§ 786, 786 a. After acceptance of the substitution, it is irrevocable, *Bassett v. Hughes*, 43 Wis. 319. Where the plaintiffs are creditors

of T., and the defendants debtors to T., an agreement by which the defendants assume T.’s debt to the plaintiffs is valid, though this involves the *pro tanto* extinction of T.’s indebtedness. *Wilson v. Coupland*, 5 B. & Ald. 228; *Hodgson v. Anderson*, 3 B. & C. 855; *Fairlie v. Denton*, 8 B. & C. 395; *Cochrane v. Green*, 9 C. B. N. S. 448; *Warren v. Batchelder*, 15 N. H. 129.

⁶ *Infra*, §§ 957.

⁷ *Story*, Prom. Note, §§ 104, 438; *Good v. Cheesman*, 2 B. & Ad. 328; *Wright v. Crockery Co.*, 1 N. H. 281; *Johnson v. Cleaves*, 15 N. H. 332; and see *supra*, § 852. The following may be cited as cases of novation by acceptance of a new security with a new debtor, discharging the old debt. *Price v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 241; *Camidge v. Allenby*, 6 B. & C. 373; *Rogers v. Langford*, 1 C. & M. 637; *Smith v. Mercer*, L. R. 3 Ex. 51; *Jenness v. Lane*, 26 Me. 475; *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *Brooks v. White*, 2

Where, however, negotiable paper made by other parties is taken in payment of goods, the vendee becomes liable in case such paper, due diligence being shown to pursue it, turns out to be worthless.¹

§ 854. To constitute novation, according to the Roman law, it is essential that there should be shown to be an intention on the part of the creditor to institute a new contractual relation—*animus novandi*. This intention must be proved by the party setting up the novation. But no particular form is requisite for this purpose, nor need it, such is the prevalent opinion, be expressly declared.² In our own law, to constitute the surrender of the old debt and the substitution of another, it must be shown from all the facts that this was the intention of the creditor, and that this intention was duly executed by an agreement with a sufficient consideration.³ It must appear that the creditor intended specifically to accept the new debtor, and agreed so to do.⁴ Thus, in a New Hampshire case, the evidence was that, C. being a creditor of the estate of D., E., D.'s executor, sold a farm belonging to the estate, and left the purchase money in the hands of S., the purchaser, to pay C., and other creditors, which debts S. agreed to pay. It was held that as C. had never assented to this arrangement before suit, or agreed in any way to accept S. as his debtor, the suit could not be maintained.⁵

Consent of the creditor to constitute a new obligation and surrender the old, is essential.

Metc. 283; *Markle v. Hatfield*, 2 Johns. 455; *Whitbeck v. Van Ness*, 11 Johns. 409; *Boyd v. Hitchcock*, 20 Johns. 76; *Booth v. Smith*, 3 Wend. 66; *Frisbie v. Larned*, 21 Wend. 450; *Christie v. Craige*, 20 Penn. St. 430; *Gresham v. Morrow*, 40 Ga. 487; *Jones v. Perkins*, 29 Miss. 142.

¹ *Infra*, §§ 954 *et seq.*

² L. 8, § 5, i. f. D. h. t.

³ *Infra*, §§ 953 *et seq.*; *Bedford v. Deakin*, 2 B. & Al. 210; *Robinson v. Read*, 9 B. & C. 449; *Robson v. Drummond*, 2 B. & Ad. 303; *Jones v. Walker*, 2 Paine, 688; *Butterfield v. Hartshorne*,

7 N. H. 345. In *Conquest's case*, L. R. 1 Ch. D. 334, it was held that assent to a novation is not to be inferred unless a definite request has been shown.

See *Hort's case*, L. R. 1 Ch. D. 307; *Robson v. Drummond*, 2 B. & Ad. 303.

⁴ *Smith v. Wheatoroft*, L. R. 9 Ch. D. 230; *Boulton v. Jones*, 2 H. & N. 564; *Miller's case*, L. R. 3 Ch. D. 391; *Boston Ice Co. v. Potter*, 123 Mass. 28; *Murphy v. Hanrahan*, 50 Wis. 489; and see *supra*, § 180.

⁵ *Butterfield v. Hartshorne*, 7 N. H. 345. See *supra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

§ 855. It stands to reason that the substitution of a new contract in the place of an old requires the assent of all the parties to the old contract, and of all the parties to the new contract. Unless all the parties to the old contract consent, it cannot be rescinded; unless all the parties to the new contract consent, it cannot be created.¹ We are thus brought to notice the fallacy of the argument on which several American courts rest the conclusion that a third party, with whom no contractual relations have been instituted by the original parties to a contract, can sue on that contract if it contains provisions for his benefit.² A cognate question arises when A. assigns to B. a debt due from C. to A. At what time does such an assignment become irrevocable by A.? The better opinion is, in conformity with what has been stated above, that until A. and C. agree to the transfer of the debt to B., and B. assents to the transfer, the transfer cannot be made. The debtor's assent is necessary to establish the contractual relation with the new creditor.³

¹ See *Murphy v. Hanrahan*, 50 Wis. 489.

² See *supra*, §§ 785 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 863; *Owen v. Bowen*, 4 C. & P. 43; *Mandeville v. Welsh*, 5 Wheat. 277; *Gibson v. Cooke*, 20 Pick. 15.

³ See *supra*, § 840. In *Boulton v. Jones*, 2 H. & N. 564, which has been the subject of much discussion, the defendants sent an order for goods to B., who (they being ignorant of the change) had transferred his business to the plaintiff. The plaintiff, to adopt Mr. Pollock's summary (3d ed. 436), supplied the goods without notifying the change, and after the goods had been accepted, sent an invoice in his own name, whereupon the defendants said they knew nothing of him. It was held that there was no contract, and that he could not recover the price of the goods. The defendants, it should be added, had a set-off against B. Mr. Benjamin, while admitting the ruling of the court to be right under the cir-

cumstances, argues that the defendants were bound "in equity either to make an equitable assignment to the vendor (plaintiff) of his [their] claim against B. for an amount equivalent to the price, or to become trustee for the seller in recovering the claim against B." Mr. Pollock rejects this view, but thinks that a proposal to a particular trader for goods might, in absence of any facts showing personal relationship, be regarded as a proposal to such trader's immediate successors and representatives in carrying on the trade.

As cases of novation see *Tatlock v. Harris*, 3 T. R. 174, and *Wilson v. Coupland*, 5 B. & Ald. 228. That all parties to the old contract must consent to the novation, so as to extinguish the old contract, as well as to establish the new contract, see *Crowfoot v. Gurney*, 9 Bing. 372; *Yates v. Bell*, 3 B. & Ald. 643; *Owen v. Bowen*, 4 C. & P. 93; *Hutchinson v. Heyworth*, 9 Ad. & El. 375; *Walker v. Rostron*, 9

§ 856. According to the Roman authorities, it is immaterial in what points the new contract differs from the old, provided the intention be to extinguish the old contract and create a new contract. The difference may be in the mode of performance,¹ or in the person of debtor or creditor,² or in some merely formal incident.³ The points of change, if not illegal, are indifferent, provided it be clear that the intention of the parties was that the new agreement should take the place of the old agreement.—When a new debtor is introduced on his own motion and not as assignee or appointee of the old debtor, this, according to the modern Roman term is *expromission*. The introduction of a new debtor on the assignment or appointment of the older, is called *delegation*. This, however, it is maintained,⁴ has nothing necessarily in common with novation. That a new debtor is introduced, as where mortgaged property is purchased with an agreement by the purchaser to pay the mortgage, does not necessarily produce a new debt. The new debtor may be bound without any novation, the old debtor may continue to be bound, or be discharged, as the particular agreement provides.—In our law, as an old agreement may be rescinded and a new established in its place without regard to the character of the modification, the same principle holds good.⁵ It is true that the substitution of a new debtor in the place of an old is ordinarily an incident of novation.⁶ But this is not necessarily the case. “A novation,” says Mr. Chitty, adopting Pothier’s definition, “may take place when, without the intervention of any new person, a debtor con-

To novation points of change are immaterial.

M. & W. 411; *Gibson v. Cooke*, 20 Pick. 15; *McKinney v. Alvis*, 14 Ill. 34; *Short v. New Orleans*, 4 La. An. 281. “Whether a note is a renewal of another note . . . depends upon the intention of the parties.” *Irving, J., Flanagan v. Hambleton*, 54 Md. 225, citing *Hacker v. Perkins*, 5 Whart. 95.

¹ L. 28 D. h. t. 8 C. h. t.

² § 3, I. quib. mod. toll. 3, 29; L. 8, § 5, I. 20 D. h. t.

³ *Ibid.*; Windscheid, § 353.

⁴ See Salpius, *ut supra*.

⁵ See *Goss v. Nugent*, 2 B. & Ad. 58; *Marshall v. Baker*, 19 Me. 402; *Medomak Bk. v. Curtis*, 24 Me. 36; *Manahan v. Noyes*, 52 N. H. 232; *Russell v. Barry*, 115 Mass. 300; *Murray v. Harway*, 56 N. Y. 337; *Wilson v. Getty*, 57 Penn. St. 266; *Shepler v. Scott*, 85 Penn. St. 329; *Thurston v. Ludwig*, 6 Oh. St. 1; and other cases cited Wh. on Ev. § 1017.

⁶ *Fairlee v. Denton*, 8 B. & C. 395; *Heaton v. Angier*, 7 N. H. 397; *Gill v. Brown*, 12 Johns. 385.

tracts a new engagement with his creditor, in consideration of being liberated from the former,"¹ and he cites cases to this effect where debtors give promissory notes upon the agreement that the creditors should receive the notes in satisfaction and extinction of the debt, and in which the novation consists not in taking a new debtor, but a new security with the old debtor.²—Under delegation, as above stated, fall cases in which on A. owing B., and B. owing C., they make a mutual arrangement by which A. becomes C.'s debtor.³ According to Pothier, as cited by Mr. Chitty,⁴ "delegation is a kind of novation, by which the original debtor, in order to be liberated from his creditor, gives him a third person, who becomes obliged in his stead to the creditor, or to the person appointed by him. A delegation is made by the concurrence of three parties, and there may be a fourth. It includes a novation, by the extinction of the debt from the person delegating, and the obligation contracted in his stead by the person delegated. Commonly, indeed, there is a double novation, for the party delegated is commonly a debtor of the person delegating; and in order to be liberated from the obligation to him, contracts a new one with his creditor. In this case there is a novation both of the obligation of the person delegating, by his giving his creditor a new debtor, and of the person delegated by the new obligation which he contracts."⁵

§ 857. Whether the new agreement operates as an extinguishment of the old, and hence technically as a novation, is a question to be determined from the entire contract. As will be elsewhere seen, the receipt of a cheque is *prima facie* proof of payment, which is made stronger by the fact that the cheque

Whether
old agree-
ment is ex-
tinguished
depends on
construc-
tion.

¹ 2 Ch. Cr. L. 11th Am. ed. 1372.

² See *infra*, §§ 955–7; Story Prom. Notes, §§ 104, 438; Good v. Cheeseman, 2 B. & Ad. 328; Garrard v. Woolner, 8 Bing. 258; Wright v. Crockery Co., 1 N. H. 281; Johnson v. Cleaver, 15 N. H. 332; Whitcomb v. Williams, 4 Pick. 228; Huse v. Alexander, 2 Met. 157; Darlington v. Gray, 5 Whart. 487; Weakley v. Bell, 9 Watts,

273. As to distinctive New York law, see *infra*, § 954.

³ 1 Ch. on Con. 11th ed. 1377; Tatlock v. Harris, 3 T. R. 174; Thompson v. Percival, 5 B. & Ad. 925; Cochrane v. Green, 9 C. B. N. S. 448.

⁴ 2 Ch. on Con. 11th ed. 1377.

⁵ Pothier, Cont. pt. 3, c. 2, art. 6, ss. 1, 2.

comes from a third party.¹ Negotiable paper may, by the understanding of the parties, be taken either in satisfaction or as a mere collateral;² the question being one of the construction of the agreement.³ But, as a general rule, the acceptance of immature negotiable paper on account only suspends the debt and operates as conditional payment, and hence as a conditional novation.⁴ When, however, by negligence of the holder, the security is lost, so that there can be no recovery on it, the original debtor is thereby released.⁵—That the old agreement is not necessarily finally extinguished, but may be revived on contingencies provided for in the agreement of substitution, is well settled.⁶ But to novation, in its full sense, the extinguishing of the old agreement is an essential feature. The old agreement is absorbed in the new agreement, and the plaintiff cannot recover on the old agreement which is no longer operative.⁷

§ 858. An agreement for substitution of one debtor for another is void unless it has sufficient consideration.⁸

If C., the creditor, for instance, simply says, "I agree to take S. (the substitute) in place of O. (the original debtor)," this is void;⁹ and so if S. simply says, "I agree to take O.'s place and become debtor to C.," this, without a consideration, does not bind S.¹⁰ But it is not necessary that such a consideration should in any degree be proportional to the interest involved. The adequacy of consideration is a question the courts do not undertake to determine.¹¹ It is enough if the promisor makes the promise on which he is charged as a compensation for some

Must be consideration for agreement of substitution.

¹ *Infra*, § 953.

² *Infra*, §§ 954 *et seq.*

³ *Sayer v. Wagstaff*, 5 Beav. 415; *Maillard v. Argyle*, 6 M. & G. 40; *Bottomley v. Nuttall*, 5 C. B. N. S. 122; see *Van Vranken v. R. R.*, 55 Iowa, 135.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 954 *et seq.*

⁵ *Infra*, § 958.

⁶ *Infra*, §§ 955 *et seq.*; Story on Part. § 254.

⁷ *Cuxon v. Chadley*, 3 B. & C. 591; *Wharton v. Walker*, 4 B. & C. 163;

Heaton v. Angier, 7 N. H. 397; *Hall v. Marston*, 17 Mass. 575; see *supra*, § 728.

⁸ *Cuxon v. Chadley*, 3 B. & C. 591; *Thomas v. Shillibeer*, 1 M. & W. 124; *McKinney v. Alvis*, 14 Ill. 34; see *supra*, § 505.

⁹ See *Butterfield v. Hartshorne*, 7 N. H. 345.

¹⁰ *Ford v. Adams*, 2 Barb. 349.

¹¹ *Supra*, § 853; and see also *supra*, §§ 516–7.

surrender, no matter how slight, by the promisee.¹ Thus if C., the original creditor, says to the substitute, "If you will take his place, I will release D.," the original debtor, this binds C.; and if S., the substitute, says to C., "If you will release D., I will take his place," this is a sufficient consideration so far as concerns S.² The extinction of intermediate original liabilities is in itself a sufficient consideration to sustain the new contract by which the parties to the reconstructed contract become bound to each other in immediate privity.³ C., the creditor, suffers detriment by surrendering D., the original debtor. S. says, "If you will submit to this detriment by letting D. go, I will take his place." This detriment to C. is a sufficient consideration for S.'s promise to C.—An extension of time, also, may be a sufficient consideration for the substitution of a new security. The creditor suffers the detriment of postponement of payment, and in consideration a better secured note is given him.⁴ Thus the surrender of one note and the acceptance of another, even for a smaller amount, coupled with an extension of payment, form a sufficient consideration to sustain the second note.⁵—The agreement between the substituted debtor and the original debtor can be rescinded at any time before the acceptance of the substitution by the original creditor.⁶—A distinction is to be taken between an assignment of a debt to A. and an order on the debtor to pay the debt to A., such order not amounting to an assignment. In the latter case, the debtor is not liable to the holder of the order unless on a promise with sufficient consideration.⁷

§ 859. Although, as has been already seen, the position has been disputed by courts in this country of high authority, the better opinion is that no one who is not a party to a contract can sue on it,⁸ and that no one

Only parties to a contract

¹ *Supra*, §§ 505, 853.

² *Supra*, §§ 526 *et seq.*

³ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1379; 165.

Bartlie v. Moor, 8 Q. B. 489; *Thomas v. Shillibeer*, 1 M. & W. 124; *Phalan v. Stiles*, 11 Vt. 82; *Windham v. Doles*, 59 Ga. 265; *Hixon v. Hetherington*, 57 Ala. 165.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*

⁵ *Hixon v. Hetherington*, 57 Ala.

⁶ *Trimble v. Strother*, 25 Oh. St. 378; *Durham v. Bischoff*, 47 Ind. 211.

⁷ *Ford v. Adams*, 2 Barb. 349; see *supra*, §§ 836 *et seq.*

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

can be sued on a contract who is not a party to it.¹ Hence no one, properly speaking, can sue on a novation who is not a party to it. may sue or
be sued
on it.

§ 860. The acceptance of a higher security from a new debtor in place of the old debt may of itself operate as a merger of the old debt in the new, unless it is understood that the security was intended only as a collateral.² This has been held to be the case where a creditor of a partnership accepts a higher security from a partner in satisfaction of a partnership debt.³ A judgment against one partner, at common law, extinguishes the firm debt;⁴ though in some states it is otherwise by statute. The question, however, is one of intention, and there is no merger unless it was understood by the parties that the new security was in satisfaction of the old debt.⁵ Extin-
guishment
may be by
merger.

§ 861. Unless it is required by statute that a contract solemnized in a particular way can only be altered and reconstructed by the same solemnities, parol proof is admissible to show that a particular contract has, before breach, been set aside and another instituted in its place. Even when particular solemnities are required, we have to go back to parol as the foundation of introductory proof. When such solemnities are not required, the proof of substitution may be by parol throughout.⁶ It should, however, to produce the effect of vacating a written contract and establishing a substituted unwritten contract, be strong and clear.⁷ Novation
may be
proved by
parol.

§ 862. A new firm may, with consent of the creditor, adopt the debt of an old firm, and if there be a sufficient consideration, the old debt may be extinguished.⁸ Novation
applied to

¹ *Supra*, §§ 809 *et seq.*

² *Supra*, § 684; *infra*, §§ 957, 1040; *Hoskinson v. Elliott*, 62 Penn. St. 393; *Bennet v. Cadwell*, 70 Penn. St. 253. ⁵ *Infra*, § 957; *Bottomley v. Nuttall*, 5 C. B. N. S. 122; *Waydell v. Lever*, 3 Denio, 410; *Claffin v. Ostrom*, 54 N. Y. 581; *Leabo v. Goodes*, 67 Mo. 126;

³ Story on Part. 7th ed. § 155; *Clement v. Brush*, 3 Johns. Cas. 180; *Tom v. Goodrich*, 2 Johns. 213; *Andrews v. Smith*, 9 Wend. 53. Hill v. Voorhies, 22 Penn. St. 60;
⁶ See *supra*, §§ 661, 690.
⁷ See Wh. on Ev. § 1017.

⁴ Lindley on Part. 4th ed. 451; *Kendall v. Hamilton*, L. R. 3 Ap. Ca. 403; *Mason v. Eldred*, 6 Wall. 231; and cases cited Story, Part. § 155. ⁸ *Weston v. Barton*, 4 Taunt. 673;
Simson v. Ingham, 2 B. & C. 72; *Hart v. Alexander*, 2 M. & W. 484.

partner-
ship.

—The questions, in cases of alleged novation by acceptance of new partnership debtors, are (1) did the new firm accept the liabilities of the old? and (2) did the creditor, knowing this, consent to the liability of the new firm and discharge the original debtor?¹ Unless these points be settled affirmatively, there is no novation.² By accepting negotiable paper in satisfaction of a debt from one partner, the substitution being intended by the parties, the partnership is discharged.³

§ 863. The mere fact of the continuance of business dealings with a firm after a change in its membership by the creditor of the firm, does not involve a release of the retiring partners. If the creditor should say, "I take as debtor the new firm instead of the old," this would, no doubt, constitute a novation, should it be followed by such an interchange of confidence as would constitute a valid consideration; but to release the old firm as such, there must be proof that something to this effect was said, or that from the facts of the case an intention to release the retiring members could be justly inferred.⁴ The intention of the parties that the new firm should be substituted for the old should be established, if not by express agreement, at least by induction from all the circumstances of the case.⁵

¹ Pollock, 3d ed. 211; Lindley on Part. L. 435; Story on Part. 7th ed. § 155; Rolfe v. Flower, L. R. 1 P. C. 27; S. C., 3 Moore P. C. N. S. 365.

² Gibson *ex parte*, L. R. 4 Ch. 662; Giddings v. Seevers, 24 Md. 363; Armsby v. Farnham, 16 Pick. 318; see Shaw v. McGregory, 105 Mass. 96; Silverman v. Chase, 90 Ill. 37.

³ *Infra*, § 957; Thompson v. Percival, 5 B. & Ad. 925; Kirwan v. Kirwan, 2 Cr. & M. 617; Harris v. Farwell, 15 Beav. 31; Harris v. Lindsay, 4 Wash. C. C. 98; Weldes v. Fessenden, 4 Met. (Mass.) 12; Gandolfo v. Appleton, 40 N. Y. 533.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 792; Hart v. Alexander, 2 M. & W. 484; Kirwan v. Kirwan, 2 C. & M. 617; Bilborough v. Holmes, L. R. 5 C. D. 255; Guild v. Belcher, 119 Mass. 257; Torrens v. Campbell, 74 Penn. St. 470; Shamburg v. Ruggles, 83 Penn. St. 148; Wright v. Brosseau, 73 Ill. 381.

⁵ Lindley on Part. 4th ed. 389 *et seq.*; Story on Part. 7th ed. § 153; Babcock v. Stewart, 58 Penn. St. 179; Hountz v. Holthouse, 85 Penn. St. 235; Beall v. Poole, 27 Md. 645; Sternburg v. Callanan, 14 Iowa, 251; see *supra*, § 855.

§ 864. An insurance company may, by the terms of its charter, reserve the right, as against its policy holders, to assign its business to another company; and when this right is reserved it can relieve itself, by making such an assignment, from liability to parties who have insured in it prior to assignment.¹

Insurance company may devolve its duties on assignee.

Whether, when there is no such clause, an assignment by the first insurer is accepted by the insured so as to relieve the former, has been ruled to be a question determinable on all the facts of the concrete case. But the mere payment of premiums to the assignee does not by itself bar the insured from further resort to the assignor.² But novation has been held to be completed by acceptance of a bonus from the assignee company;³ by procuring a specific recognition by the new company of its liability accompanied by payments of premiums to such company;⁴ by exclusive dealings with the assignee company for a long lapse of time;⁵ by application to the assignee company in case of loss as the sole debtor.⁶ But an application for an endorsement of a policy, such endorsement being refused because the applicant would not sign a written consent to the transfer, coupled with taking receipts in the name of the assignee, does not constitute a novation.⁷

§ 865. Novation, being a new contract, based, it is true, upon the extinguishment of a prior contract, but starting an independent obligation dating from its own inception, is not to be regarded as within that provision of the statute of frauds which prescribes a particular form for an agreement to pay another's debt.⁸ If

Novation within statute of frauds.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 791; Hort's case, L. R. 1 C. D. 307; Grain's case, L. R. 1 C. D. 315; Cocker's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 1; Doman's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 21; Dowse's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 384.

² Conquest's case, L. R. 1 C. D. 334.

³ Times Life Ass. Co., L. R. 5 Ch. 381.

⁴ Blood *ex parte*, L. R. 9 Eq. 316; Miller's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 391.

⁵ Cocker's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 1.

⁶ National Prov. Ass. Soc. *in re*, L. R. 9 Eq. 306.

⁷ Leake, 2d ed. 792; Manchester, etc., Ass. *in re*, L. R. 5 Ch. 640. That the acceptance of payments of an annuity from the assignee of the company granting the annuity is not a novation, see Family Endowment Soc. *in re*, L. R. 5 Ch. 118.

⁸ Bird v. Gammon, 3 Bing. N. C. 883; Dearborn v. Parks, 5 Greenl. 81; Rowe v. Whittier, 21 Me. 545; Pike v.

the original debt is discharged, the new promise may be established by parol.¹ But while a novation is not within the statute of frauds in the sense of involving an agreement to pay another's debt, it is as much within the terms of that statute as it would be were there no prior agreement outstanding between the parties. In other words, the fact that a prior agreement has been duly executed in accordance with the statute by the parties, does not in itself validate a new agreement between the parties without the adoption of the formalities the statute prescribes. The intention of the parties, it is true, can be brought out in rectification of the old contract, and this without a new solemnization. But to constitute a new contract there must be a new solemnization in conformity with the statute of frauds.²

Brown, 7 Cush. 133; Barker v. Bucklin, 2 Denio, 45; Farley v. Cleveland, 4 Cow. 432; Rice v. Carter, 11 Ired. 298; Files v. McLeod, 14 Ala. 611; Robbins v. Ayres, 10 Mo. 358; see *supra*, §§ 661, 690.

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 1017, and cases there cited; Goss v. Nugent, 2 B. & Ad. 58;

Bird v. Gammon, 3 Bing. N. C. 883; Medomak Bk. v. Curtis, 24 Me. 36; Wiggin v. Goodwin, 63 Me. 389; Curtis v. Brown, 5 Cush. 492; Watson v. Randall, 20 Wend. 201; Draughan v. Bunting, 9 Ired. 10.

² Wh. on Ev. § 1035; see *supra*, §§ 661, 690.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MODE OF PERFORMANCE.

I. GENERAL RULES.

Performance must be in accordance with terms of contract, § 869.

By consent mode of performance may be varied, § 870.

[As to conditions, see *supra*, §§ 545 *et seq.*]

[As to part performance of contract of service, see *supra*, §§ 716 *et seq.*: of contract of sale, *infra*, § 899.]

II. PLACE.

Performance to be in assigned place, § 871.

When no place is designated, place of performance is to be inferred, § 872.

On contract to pay money tender must be made personally, § 873.

Form of contract determined by place of solemnization; meaning of words by place of agreement; process by *lex fori*; mode of performance by *lex loci solutionis*, § 874.

Distinctive rule as to negotiable paper, § 875.

Distinctive rule as to insurance, § 875 *a*.

Distinctive rule as to common carriers, § 876.

On contract for sale of goods delivery may be to purchaser's carrier, § 877.

Otherwise as to delivery to captain of ship on bill of lading, § 878.

Vendor must see goods are properly received by carrier, § 879.

Vendor may make carrier his agent, § 880.

III. TIME.

Money obligations without date are payable on demand, § 881.

When no time is fixed for performance a reasonable time is implied, § 882.

So of goods payable on demand, § 882 *a*.

Time in other cases to be inferred, § 883.

When time is fixed, full limit is allowed, § 884.

Last business hour permissible, § 885.

Party by disabling himself or refusing may make himself liable to suit before day fixed, § 885 *a*.

"Forthwith" and similar terms to be construed according to context, § 886.

Time may be of essence, and if so stipulations enforcing it will be compelled, § 887.

Construction of time in equity same as in law, § 888.

Forfeiture may be fixed by agreement, § 889.

Forfeiture from lapse of time cannot be exacted by dilatory party, § 890.

Punctuality waived by acceptance, § 891.

Time may by notice be made essential, § 892.

Nominal date presumed to be real, § 893.

Date of beginning of lease determined by context, § 894.

When liability continues from one specified day to another, the first is excluded and the last included, § 895.
 "Month" in mercantile contracts means "calendar" month, § 896.
 When time falls on Sunday, delivery may be on next day, § 897.

IV. QUANTITY OR QUALITY.

Quantity stipulated for must be delivered, § 898.
 When duty is divisible, performance may be partial, § 899.
 Otherwise when aggregate is contracted for, § 900.
 Party preventing completion cannot charge the other with the loss, § 901.
 "About," "more or less," are proximate terms, § 902.
 Article not answering description may be returned, § 903.
 Or vendor may be sued on warranty, § 904.
 Article supplied to order is warranted to answer order, § 905.
 And so when vendor is specially trusted, § 906.
 Otherwise when purchaser buys on his own judgment, § 907.

Vendor may be liable for negligence, § 908.
 Express warranty excludes implied, § 909.
 Warranty may be implied from usage, § 910.
 Warranty does not cover depreciation in transit, § 911.
 Provisions sold for domestic use must be fit, § 912.
 Conditions imposed by local law must be complied with, § 913.
 On sale by sample article must conform to sample, § 914.
 Showing sample is not necessarily selling by sample, § 915.
 On sale by sample or description purchaser must have opportunity of inspection, § 916.
 Average correspondence with sample is enough, § 917.
 Warranty may be added to sample, § 918.

V. RESCISSION.

On non-performance of condition precedent, contract may be rescinded, § 919.

I. GENERAL RULES.

§ 869. THE performance of a contract must be in the mode the contract itself specifies.¹ If there is a material failure in this respect, the promisor is liable to the promisee for the breach.² Thus, in an action for a breach of a covenant in a farming lease in selling

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 821; *Haldane v. Johnson*, 8 Exch. 689; *Poole v. Tunbridge*, 2 M. & W. 223; *Higgins v. Emmons*, 5 Conn. 756.

² *Richardson v. Barnes*, 4 Ex. 128; *Bailey v. Long*, 24 Kan. 90. That substantial conformity is enough, see *Glaucius v. Black*, 50 N. Y. 149, 67 N. Y. 563; *Woodward v. Fuller*, 80 N. Y. 312; *Heekmann v. Pinkney*, 81 N. Y.

211; *Dadchey v. Drake*, 85 N. Y. 407; *Preston v. Finney*, 2 W. & S. 53; *Danville Bridge Co. v. Pomroy*, 15 Penn. St. 151; *Messner v. Lancaster Co.*, 23 Penn. St. 291; *Stewart v. McQuaide*, 48 Penn. St. 191; and see further *supra*, §§ 190, 259, 607. As to construction of contract, see *supra*, §§ 627 *et seq.*

manure and allowing it to be removed, a plea that the tenant had brought back more manure than he carried off was held bad, as introducing a new mode of performance differing from that agreed on.¹—If the delivery be in the way specified, then the creditor cannot recover damages for non-reception, if this arose from his not being present at the time and place designated for the reception.² The failure is imputable to him, and he cannot transfer the loss to the other party.³—The way in which delivery of goods is to be made is sometimes specified in the contract of sale, in which case the delivery is to conform to the directions thus given.⁴ But when there is no such direction, the mode of delivery may be appointed by the purchaser, as whose representative the vendor, in complying with such directions, acts.⁵—The delivery to the purchaser's agent is delivery to the purchaser.⁶ And as we will hereafter see,⁷ delivery to a common carrier, when in accordance with business usage under the circumstances, is also delivery to the purchaser.—The subject of conditional performance is discussed in prior sections;⁸ and so of alternative contracts.⁹

§ 870. Without invalidating a contract, or making its re-execution necessary under the statute of frauds, the mode of performing it may be varied by consent.¹⁰ In such cases, as we have already seen, the old contract remains in force, the application of the contract being regarded as something extrinsic to it, which the parties can subsequently mould without affecting the integrity of the contract, as such.¹¹ And this is the case even as to contracts

By consent
mode of
perform-
ance may
be varied.

¹ Leigh v. Lillie, 6 H. & N. 165.

² Case v. Green, 5 Watts, 262.

³ Slingerland v. Morse, 8 Johns. 474; Mitchell v. Merrill, 2 Blackf. 87; *supra*, §§ 312, 325, 603, 716.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 826; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. §§ 683 *et seq.*

⁵ *Ibid.*; Benj. on Sales, § 319; Pearson *ex parte*, L. R. 3 Ch. 443.

⁶ Wing v. Clarke, 24 Me. 373; Hunter v. Wright, 12 Allen, 548.

⁷ *Infra*, § 877.

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 545 *et seq.*

⁹ *Supra*, § 616.

¹⁰ Wh. on Ev. § 1026; *supra*, §§ 661, 690.

¹¹ *Supra*, § 499; Wh. on Ev. § 1026; Leake, 2d ed. 823; Leather Co. v. Hieronymus, L. R. 10 Q. B. 140; Tyers v. Iron Co., L. R. 8 Ex. 315; Plevins v. Downing, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 220; Flagg v. Dryden, 7 Pick. 53; Chester v. Bank of Kingston, 16 N. Y. 336; Agawam Bk. v. Strever, 18 N. Y. 502; Hutchins v. Hebbard, 34 N. Y. 26; Malone v. Dougherty, 79 Penn. St. 46; Bladen v. Wells, 30 Md. 582; Moore v. Davidson, 18 Ala. 209; see Lawrence v. Miller, 86 N. Y. 131.

under statute of frauds, provided there is no substantial alteration of the terms of the contract.¹ Hence, it is competent for the parties to agree to extend the period for performance; and when there is any consideration for this agreement, it is operative.² And a sufficient consideration is found in the mutual promises of the parties based on gain to one party conditioned on detriment to the other.³ "After the agreement has been reduced into writing, it is competent to the parties, at any time before the breach of it, by a new contract not in writing, either to waive, dissolve, or amend the former agreement, or in any manner to add to, or subtract from, or vary, or qualify the terms of it, and thus to make a new contract; which is to be proved, partly by the written agreement, and partly by the subsequent terms engrafted upon what will be thus left of the written agreement."⁴ It will be sufficient if the new agreement be made at the time of the breach of the old. Thus in a case in Pennsylvania, in 1880, P. contracted to buy oil of V., on or before a certain date at seller's option. V. tendered the oil, but P. answered that he could not at the moment take and pay for it, and asked for time. V. thereupon, without withdrawing his tender, agreed that P. might have the oil at any time before the expiration of the then ensuing month. It was ruled that the new agreement of the parties was a binding contract for which the mutual promises of postponement formed sufficient consideration, and that P. having within the stipulated time, and at the proper place, offered to take the oil, but having failed to find V. or any one authorized to act for him, V. had broken his contract, and P. was entitled to recover from a stakeholder margins deposited by V. to secure his compliance with the terms of the original contract.⁵

¹ See Wh. on Ev. § 1035.

² *Supra*, § 499.

³ *Supra*, § 505; Robinson v. Bachelor, 4 N. H. 40; Keating v. Price, 1 Johns. Ca. 22; M'Combs v. M'Kennan, 2 W. & S. 216; Carrier v. Dilworth, 59 Penn. St. 406.

⁴ Goss v. Nugent, 5 B. & Ad. 58.

⁵ McNish v. Reynolds, 10 Weekly Notes, 24. "If," said Trunkey, J., "at the moment for performance of a contract by one party, both agree to a postponement, is the contract broken? A. sells B. a horse for a stipulated price; the horse to be delivered and money paid on a certain day. At the

II. PLACE.

§ 871. When a particular time and place are designated for the performance, the performance must be at that particular time and place.¹ If the place alone is designated, the debtor, in undertaking the performance, must select some reasonable time and notify the creditor accordingly. Should the parties meet at the designated place at any time after the maturity of the obligation, the tender may be in time, provided there is nothing that makes it at that time inconvenient.² If the creditor be notified that the goods are ready for him at the place and time designated by the contract, he cannot recover damages for a breach.³—A common carrier's contract is to deliver the goods received by him at the place to which they are directed. After tender of the goods at that place, his liability as a

Perform-
ance to be
in assigned
place.

appointed time A. tenders the horse. B. says, I am not ready, but if you will wait till to-morrow, I will take the horse and pay you; to which A. agrees. The new contract is as valid as the old. The mutual promises, the one to deliver, and the other to accept and pay, were ample consideration to sustain the new contract. (*Carrier v. Dilworth*, 9 P. F. S. 406.) Can it be that in such case the old was broken, and A. could recover damages for the breach? If his right of action accrued at all, it was at the instant he agreed to a change of time for delivery and payment, instead of demanding strict performance. The parties carried the yet unbroken contract into a new one, and neither has a just claim for damages."

¹ *Savary v. Goe*, 3 Wash. C. C. 140; *Savage Man. Co. v. Armstrong*, 19 Me. 147; *Bates v. Churchill*, 32 Me. 31; *Newton v. Galbraith*, 5 Johns. 119; *Goodwin v. Holbrook*, 4 Wend. 380; *Millard v. Morse*, 32 Penn. St. 506.

Whether delivery at the time and place fixed by the contract is good, though the creditor was not present at the time, see *Robbins v. Luce*, 4 Mass. 874; *Brown v. Berry*, 14 N. H. 459; *contra*, *Smith v. Loomis*, 7 Conn. 110. Where a contract for the sale and delivery of perishable commodities, such as milk, expressly provides that it is to be shipped by the seller to the place of business of the purchaser at the expense of the seller, the place of delivery is the business place of the purchaser, and any loss on the way must fall upon the seller. *Devine v. Edwards*, 101 Ill. 138. As to tender, see *infra*, §§ 989, 990 *et seq.*

² *Infra*, § 990; *Leake*, 2d ed. 851; citing *Shepherd's Touch*. 136; *Co. Lit.* 211 *a*; *Cocker v. Hemp Co.*, 3 Sumn. 530; *Howard v. Miner*, 20 Me. 325; *Adams v. Adams*, 26 Ala. 272; and see *Savage Man. Co. v. Armstrong*, 19 Me. 147.

³ *Downer v. Sinclair*, 15 Vt. 495; *Phelps v. Hubbard*, 51 Vt. 489.

carrier ceases.¹—The tender is sufficient if at the designated time and place, though the party to receive did not attend.²

§ 872. When no place of performance is designated in a contract, the place of performance is to be inferred from all the circumstances of the case. Where the principal leaves his business in the hands of a general local agent, then such place of business is to be imputed to the principal,³ though it is necessarily otherwise as to travelling agents.⁴ When an obligation is assumed by a party at his domicil, then his domicil is the place of performance, unless the obligation otherwise provides.⁵ *Dating* is not conclusive as to a particular place; and even as to negotiable paper, evidence, so far as concerns accommodation parties, may be received to show that the place at which the document was dated was not meant to be the real place of performance;⁶ though it is otherwise as to parties without notice.⁷ Where the obligation, however, is from the nature of the case to be performed at a particular place, then such place is to be regarded as the place of performance, though not the obligor's domicil.⁸ The debtor's place of business, also, is to be preferred to his domicil, as the place of performance, when from the facts of the case it appears that the performance is to be at the place of business.⁹ When there are no indications of a different intention, goods which it is the custom of business to transfer to the purchaser in the place where they are, are to be delivered at the place at which they were at the time of the contract;¹⁰ and this is eminently the case with articles which are difficult to move, and as to the place of delivery of

¹ *Hyde v. Nav. Co.*, 5 T. R. 389; § 457; *Fant v. Miller*, 17 Grat. 47; see *Shepherd v. R. R.*, L. R. 3 Ex. 189; *infra*, §§ 881, 899.

Hengh v. R. R., L. R. 5 Ex. 51; and see, generally, *Hamilton v. Calhoun*, 2 Watts, 130; *Ege v. Kauffman*, 1 W. & S. 120; *Parker v. Jacobs*, 14 S. C. 112; *infra*, § 990.

² *Infra*, § 990.

³ Wh. Con. of L. § 405.

⁴ *Ibid.* § 406.

⁵ *Ibid.* § 460. As to tender, see §§ 980, 987, 990 *et seq.*

⁶ Wh. on Ev. § 979; Wh. Con. of L.

⁷ *Chapman v. Cottrell*, 3 H. & C. 865; *Horne v. Rotquette*, L. R. 3 Q. B. D. 514; *Towne v. Rice*, 122 Mass. 67; *Vanzant v. Arnold*, 31 Ga. 210.

⁸ *Cox v. U. S.*, 6 Pet. 172; *Duncan v. U. S.*, 7 Pet. 435; *infra*, § 990.

⁹ Wh. Con. of L. § 412.

¹⁰ *Bronson v. Gleeson*, 7 Barb. 472; *Lobdell v. Hopkins*, 5 Cow. 518; *Barr v. Myers*, 3 Watts & S. 295.

which no specific directions are given.¹ On the other hand, "if the property is portable, it must be taken to the creditor, and delivered to him or at his residence."² When mingled with other goods, the property sold should be separated for the purposes of tender.³ A place of business, however, where articles of the character in question are usually stored, and from which they are delivered, may be regarded as the place of delivery;⁴ though when goods, such as are usually sent to a customer, are to be delivered to him on a specified day, the delivery must be at his residence,⁵ supposing he appoints no other place for delivery.⁶—When a note is payable in specific articles, and no place of payment is fixed, the maker is to seek out the payee, and deliver to him personally, or if they be too heavy to be readily moved, to apply to him to fix a place of delivery.⁷ When chattles are to be delivered to a party living out of the state, the vendor, if he has no specific directions, and has no prior course of business to guide him, should apply to the purchaser for orders before the goods are forwarded.⁸—The rule that a place, when not designated, is to be inferred, is illustrated by a Pennsylvania case in 1880, where it was held that a sale of carpets by the married lessee of a house, to his unmarried brother residing with him, did not necessarily involve a removal of the carpets.⁹—Where a contract of apprenticeship contains no provision as to the place where it is to be performed by the master, the place is to be inferred from all the circumstances of the case, and is not limited to the place where the master was at the time of the contract.¹⁰

¹ Howard v. Miner, 20 Me. 325; Lobdell v. Hopkins, 5 Cow. 516; Goodwin v. Holbrook, 4 Wend. 377; Barr v. Myers, 3 W. & S. 299; Mingus v. Pritchett, 3 Dev. 78.

² Ross, J., Roberts v. Beatty, 2 P. & W. 71; see Miles v. Roberts, 34 N. H. 254. As to tender, see *infra*, § 992.

³ Ibid.; Goodwin v. Holbrook, 4 Wend. 377.

⁴ Bronson v. Gleeson, 7 Barb. 472.

⁵ Goodwin v. Holbrook, 4 Wend. 377; Bronson v. Gleeson, 7 Barb. 472; Barr

v. Myers, 3 Watts & S. 295; see *infra*, § 982.

⁶ Peck v. Hubbard, 11 Vt. 612; see *infra*, § 990.

⁷ Stewart v. Morrow, 1 Grant (Penn.) 204.

⁸ Bixby v. Whitney, 5 Greenl. 192. As to delivery out of state see *infra*,

§ 990.

⁹ Evans v. Scott, 89 Penn. St. 136.

¹⁰ Royce v. Charlton, L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 1.

§ 873. Where there is a contract to pay money, the money, on the maturity of the debt, must be tendered to the creditor personally, wherever, such is the English rule, he may happen to be, provided he be in England;¹ and it has been held that, under a composition deed which requires the debtor to give notes to the several creditors in satisfaction of their debts, the tender must be to the creditors personally, although there be no application from the creditors.² And although it has been held that this seeking out the creditor for the purpose of tender is not necessary when the creditor has gone abroad, and the debt is payable in England, yet it is otherwise when the debt is payable abroad at the residence of the foreign creditor. In such case the tender must be made to the foreign creditor at his residence.³—The holder of a note or bill, also, when there is on the paper no designated place of payment, must be sought out wherever he is.⁴—Even where a tenant covenants to pay rent in the manner stipulated in the lease, no place of payment being specified, it is not sufficient for the tenant to be on the premises leased on the designated day with money ready to pay the lessor. The lessor must be personally sought.⁵—A tender may be made by an agent to an agent.⁶

§ 874. As is elsewhere more fully shown,⁷ when there are two or more conflicting local laws bearing upon a contract, the mode of solemnization is to be determined by the law of the place where it is solemnized; the meaning of the words by the law of the place where it was agreed upon, or, in some instances, where the party first using the words was

¹ *Infra*, § 971; Leake, 2d ed. 853, citing Sheppard's Touch. 136; Lit. s. 340; Howard v. Miner, 20 Me. 325; Smith v. Smith, 25 Wend. 405; 2 Hill, 351; and see Eastman v. Rapids, 21 Iowa, 590.

² Cranley v. Hillary, 2 M. & S. 120.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 853; Fessard v. Mugnier, 18 C. B. N. S. 286. That it is not necessary in this country to

seek out a creditor in another state, see Green. Ev. § 611; Allshouse v. Ramsay, 6 Whart. 331; and cases *infra*, § 990.

⁴ Turner v. Hayden, 4 B. & C. 1; Poole v. Tunbridge, 2 M. & W. 225.

⁵ Haldane v. Johnson, 8 Exch. 689; see Rowe v. Young, 2 Brod. & B. 165.

⁶ *Infra*, § 982.

⁷ Wh. Con. of L. § 401.

doing business at the time he used them ; process is to be determined by the law of the place in which the suit is brought ; and the mode of performance by the law of the place of performance. In each case, however, the law of the *forum*, if based on distinctive national policy, or when fixed by peremptory legislation, overrides foreign laws.¹

agreement ;
process by
lex fori ;
mode of
perform-
ance by
*lex loci
solutionis*.

§ 875. In respect to negotiable paper, the limitations of capacity are not ubiquitous ;² formalities are regulated by the *lex loci actus* ;³ the duties of acceptor and maker are determined by the law of the place of payment ;⁴ days of grace, interest, demand, protest, and notice are determinable by the same law ;⁵ and so of defences that go to the merits.⁶ The *lex fori* determines questions of process.⁷ Where a note is payable at a particular time and place, the plaintiff may maintain his action without proving a demand at the time and place designated. Tender, in such cases, is a matter of defence.⁸

Distinctive
rule as to
negotiable
paper.

§ 875 *a*. Insurance policies are ordinarily governed by the law of the principal place of business of the company issuing the policy, though it is otherwise when the insurance is effected by local agents with power to act.⁹ Suits for premium are governed by the law of the place of paying the premium, which, unless otherwise designated, is the domicile of the insured.¹⁰

Distinctive
rule as to
insurance.

§ 876. The interpretation of a bill of lading, so far as concerns its intrinsic qualities, is for the place of the carrier's principal office ; and such, also, is the rule with regard to the construction of contracts limiting the carrier's liability for negligence.¹¹ The law of the place of performance, however, determines the conditions of performance.¹²

Distinctive
rule as to
common
carriers.

¹ Ibid. § 428 ; *supra*, §§ 631, 637.

² Wh. Con. of L. § 447.

³ Ibid. § 448.

⁴ Ibid. §§ 450-3.

⁵ Ibid. §§ 452 *et seq.*

⁶ Ibid. § 462 *a*.

⁷ Ibid. § 462.

⁸ *Fleming v. Potter*, 7 Watts, 380 ; *infra*, §§ 970 *et seq.*

⁹ Wh. Con. of L. § 465 ; *supra*, § 670.

¹⁰ Ibid. § 467.

¹¹ Wh. Con. of L. §§ 471 *et seq.*

¹² Ibid. § 473 *a*.

§ 877. It is not to be expected that a vendor of goods should carry them about until he finds out the purchaser. It is sufficient for him to apply to the purchaser for directions as to the mode of delivery, and placing the goods in this channel will be an adequate delivery.¹ Hence delivery of the goods to a carrier, whether such carrier be expressly designated by the purchaser, or his selection be in accordance with the usual course of business under such circumstances, is delivery to the purchaser.² The property, it is held, on due delivery to the proper carrier, becomes the property of the purchaser, subject only to the vendor's right of stoppage *in transitu*.³ On the other hand, in order to work such transfer of property, it is not necessary that any particular carrier should be selected by the purchaser. It is enough if there be a general order, express or implied, to forward by rail or boat, as the case may be.⁴ It makes, also, no difference which party pays the freight.⁵ But the vendor, in delivering the goods to the carrier, must take such precautions, and guard the transaction with such receipts, as will give the purchaser due proof, if it become necessary for him afterward to sue the purchaser.⁶—The vendor may ex-

¹ *Supra*, §§ 871 *et seq.*; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 693; Leake, 2d ed. 854; *Md.* 344; *Diversy v. Kellogg*, 44 Ill. Leather Cloth Co. v. Hieronymus, L. 114. R. 10 Q. B. 140.

² Wh. Con. of L. §§ 417, 486; *Dunlop v. Lambert*, 6 Cl. & F. 600; *Norman v. Phillips*, 14 M. & W. 277; *Wait v. Baker*, 2 Ex. 1; *Dutton v. Solomonson*, 3 B. & P. 582; *Woolsey v. Bailey*, 27 N. H. 217; *Garland v. Lane*, 46 N. H. 245; *Arnold v. Prout*, 51 N. H. 587; *Strong v. Dodds*, 47 Vt. 348; *Finch v. Mansfield*, 97 Mass. 89; *Johnson v. Stoddard*, 100 Mass. 306; *First Nat. Bk. v. Crooker*, 111 Mass. 166; *Suit v. Woodhall*, 113 Mass. 391; *Hall v. Gaylor*, 37 Conn. 550; *Waldron v. Romaine*, 22 N. Y. 368; *Rodgers v. Phillips*, 40 N. Y. 519; *Wilcox Co. v. Green*, 72 N. Y. 17; *Higgins v. Murray*, 73 N. Y. 252; *Glen v. Whitaker*,

³ *Dolan v. Green*, 110 Mass. 323; *Backman v. Jenks*, 55 Barb. 469; *Hyde v. Goodnow*, 3 N. Y. 266.

⁴ Benj. *ut supra*, § 399, note; *Garland v. Lane*, 46 N. H. 245; *Arnold v. Prout*, 51 N. H. 587; *Finch v. Mansfield*, 97 Mass. 89; *Suit v. Woodhall*, 113 Mass. 391; *Schlesinger v. Stratton*, 9 R. I. 578; *Mack v. Lee*, 13 R. I.; *Backman v. Jenks*, 55 Barb. 469; *Hyde v. Goodnow*, 3 N. Y. 266; *Watkins v. Paine*, 57 Ga. 50.

⁵ *Ibid.*; *Dutton v. Solomonson*, 3 B. & P. 584; *Ranney v. Higby*, 5 Wis. 62.

⁶ *Infra*, § 879; *Buckman v. Levi*, 3 Camp. 414; *Alexander v. Gardner*, 1 Bing. N. C. 671.

pressly stipulate that the carrier shall act as his agent, and that there shall be no delivery till the goods reach the purchaser's hands.¹ And while a delivery to the purchaser's own ships is a delivery ordinarily to the purchaser, the vendor may, by special agreement, reserve to himself in such cases the *jus disponendi*.² Delivery, however, may be inferred from proof that the vendor acted, in thus shipping the goods, as agent for the purchaser, and did not intend to retain control over the property.³

¹ *Infra*, § 880; *Ibid.*; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. §§ 392, 395, 399; *Wait v. Baker*, 2 Ex. 1; *Turner v. Liverpool Docks*, 6 Ex. 543.

² *Turner v. Liverpool Dock Trustees*, 6 Ex. 543; *Ellershaw v. Magniac*, 6 Ex. 570; *Brandt v. Bowlby*, 2 B. & Ad. 932; *Moakes v. Nicolson*, 19 C. B. N. S. 290; *Schotsmans v. R. R.*, L. R. 2 Ch. Ap. 332.

³ Benj. on Sales, *ut supra*; *Van Casteel v. Booker*, 2 Ex. 691; *Brown v. Hare*, 4 H. & N. 822; *Joyce v. Swan*, 17 C. B. N. S. 84; *Moakes v. Nicolson*, 19 C. B. N. S. 290.

In *Bullock v. Stcherge*, U. S. Dist. Ct. Iowa, 16 West. Jur. 354, we have the following from McCrary, J.: "Again, Benjamin, sec. 804: 'A delivery of goods to a common carrier for conveyance to the buyer is such a delivery of actual possession to the buyer, through his agent, the carrier, as suffices to put an end to the vendor's lien.' Citing a large number of authorities. See also sec. 675.

"Again, Benjamin, sec. 181, says: 'It is well settled that a delivery of goods to a common carrier, *à fortiori* to one specially designated by the purchaser for a conveyance to him or to a place designated by him, constitutes an actual receipt by the purchaser. In such cases the carrier is in contemplation of law the bailee of the person to whom, not by whom, the goods are

sent, the latter in employing the carrier being considered as the agent of the former for that purpose. It must not be forgotten that the carrier only represents the purchaser for the purpose of receiving, not accepting the goods. The law of the United States is the same. *Cross v. O'Donnell*, 44 N. Y. 661; *Caulkins v. Hellman*, 47 N. Y. 449. Citing a large number of English and American cases in note "G."'

"In note 'G' it is said: 'It is not necessary that the purchaser should employ the carrier personally or by some other agent than the vendor. We see no reason why a delivery to a warehouseman should not have the same effect. *Merchant v. Chapman*, 4 Allen, 362; *Hunter v. Wright*, 12 Allen, 548-550. The doctrine in section 181 is repeated with some emphasis in section 693. In *Philips v. Bistolli*, 2 B. & C. 511, the court say: 'To satisfy the statute there must be a delivery of the goods by the vendor with intention of vesting the right of possession in the vendee, and there must be an actual acceptance by the latter with an intention of taking to the possession as owner.' *Id.* 142. And in note G: 'A mere delivery is not sufficient; there must further be an acceptance and receipt by the purchaser, else he will not be bound.' Citing *Shepherd v. Pressey*, 32 N. H. 57. Again in the same note:

§ 878. "Where goods are delivered on board of a vessel to be carried, and a bill of lading is taken, the delivery by the vendor is not a delivery to the buyer, but to the captain as bailee for delivery to the person indicated by the bill of lading, as the one for whom they are to be carried."¹ It may be considered as settled that the vendor, by making the bill of lading deliverable to his order, may be regarded, until the contrary be shown, as intending to reserve to himself the *jus disponendi*, so that the property does not vest in the purchaser.² And the rule that the property in such cases does not pass to the consignee, holds even though the bill of lading recited that the consignee was to pay no freight, as the goods were "owner's property ;"³ and so where the vessel was chartered by the consignee,⁴ or even owned by him.⁵ A delivery of a bill of lading, coupled with endorsement, if payable to order, passes a title to the goods,⁶ though a delivery without endorsement,

Otherwise
as to delivery to captain of ship on bill of lading.

"In truth the statute is silent as to the delivery of the goods sold, which is the act of the seller. It requires the acceptance and receipt of some part thereof, which are subsequent acts of the buyer. Foster, J., in Boardman v. Spooner, 13 Allen, 357; Prescott v. Lock, 51 N. H. 94."

"Again, sec. 155: 'In Coombs v. The Bristol and Exeter Railroad Co., 3 H. & N. 510, Pollock, Chief Baron, said, the "vendee should have an opportunity of rejecting the goods. The statute requires not only delivery but acceptance."' 'It may,' says Benjamin, 'be confidently assumed that the construction which attributes distinct meanings to the two expressions "acceptance" and "actual receipt" is now too firmly settled to be treated as an open question, and this is plainly to be inferred from the opinions delivered in Smith v. Hudson, 6 B. & S. 431.'"

¹ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 399. "This principle," says Mr. Benjamin, "runs through all the cases, and is clearly enunciated by Parke, B., in

Wait v. Baker, 2 Ex. 1; and by Byles, J., in Moakes v. Nicolson, 19 C. B. N. S. 290." To same effect see Shepherd v. Harrison, L. R. 4 Q. B. 197; L. R. 5 H. L. 116; Gabarron v. Kreeft, L. R. 10 Ex. 274; Newhall v. Vargas, 13 Me. 93.

² Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 399; Wilmshurst v. Bowker, 2 M. & G. 792; Ellershaw v. Magniac, 6 Ex. 570; Van Casteel v. Booker, 2 Ex. 691; Jenkyns v. Brown, 14 Q. B. 496; Shepherd v. Harrison, *ut supra*; Merchants' Nat. Bk. v. Bangs, 102 Mass. 298.

³ Turner v. Liverpool Docks, 6 Exch. 543.

⁴ Berndtson v. Strang, L. R. 4 Eq. 481.

⁵ Wait v. Baker, 2 Exch. 1; see to same general effect Stubbs v. Lund, 7 Mass. 457; Rowley v. Bigelow, 12 Pick. 308.

⁶ Lickbarrow v. Mason, 2 T. R. 63; Berkley v. Walling, 7 A. & E. 39; 2 N. & P. 178; Skilling v. Bollman, 73 Mo. 665.

while it may create a lien, does not pass the title as against the creditors of the shipper.¹ And one who receives a bill of lading, even by endorsement, either as collateral security for, or in payment of, prior indebtedness, has no title as a *bona fide* purchaser for value.² The endorsement passes only the title of the endorser.³

§ 879. When the question is one of delivery through a common carrier, the vendor must see that the goods are properly received by the carrier.⁴ Thus where it was notorious at a port of lading that carriers were not responsible for an excess of value of an article lost beyond 5%, unless notified of the value, and paid specially, it was held by Lord Ellenborough that a vendor who neglected to give the proper notice of value to the carrier was responsible for the loss to the purchaser.⁵

Vendor must see goods are properly received by carrier.

§ 880. A vendor, by undertaking to deliver at a distant point, may make the carrier his agent, in which case the vendor assumes the risk of the carriage.⁶ And this holds good even when the promise by the vendor to deliver at the purchaser's place of business is made after the original contract of sale, and when there is no usage as to mode of delivery.⁷

Vendor may make carrier his agent.

III. TIME.

§ 881. A bill or note, not designating any time for payment, is payable on demand, but interest does not begin to run, unless expressly provided by the instrument, until demand is made.⁸ On the other hand, it is held that interest on a money bond not specifying

Money obligations without date are payable on demand.

¹ *Stone v. Swift*, 4 Pick. 389; *Bissell v. Steel*, 67 Penn. St. 443; *supra*, § 793.

² *Lesassur v. The Southwestern*, 2 Woods, 35; *Naylor v. Dennie*, 8 Pick. 199; *Harris v. Pratt*, 17 N. Y. 249; *O'Brien v. Norris*, 16 Md. 122; *Loeb v. Peters*, 63 Ala. 243; *Skilling v. Bollman*, 73 Mo. 665.

³ *Empire Trans. Co. v. Steele*, 70 Penn. St. 188.

⁴ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 694;

Buckman v. Levi, 3 Camp. 414; *Cothay v. Tute*, 3 Camp. 129; *Alexander v. Gardner*, 1 Bing. N. C. 671.

⁵ *Clarke v. Hutchins*, 14 East, 475.

⁶ *Dunlop v. Lambert*, 6 Cl. & F. 600.

⁷ *Taylor v. Cole*, 111 Mass. 363; *Hanauer v. Bartels*, 2 Col. 514; cited *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 694; *Turner v. Liverpool Docks*, 6 Ex. 543.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 836; *Whitlock v.*

Underwood, 2 B. & C. 157; *Brown in*

any day for payment, runs from the date of the bond, which is regarded as an obligation for the payment of money on that day.¹—As will be hereafter seen, prior demand is not ordinarily necessary to constitute indebtedness;² though it may be necessary in contracts of bailment or sale.³ Bonds, also, conditioned for payment on demand require demand.⁴

§ 882. When no time for the performance of a contract is fixed, it will be held that the performance must be at a reasonable time, taking all the circumstances of the case in consideration.⁵ Thus when no time is fixed for the delivery of goods sold, the character of the goods, their locality, and the locality of the parties, are to be taken into consideration.⁶ The fact that payment is not to be made till a definite period after sale does not by itself defer the delivery till then,⁷ though evidence has been admitted under such a contract to the effect that delivery and payment were to be simultaneous.⁸ And an agreement for the sale of goods “to be delivered and paid for in fourteen days,” means that payment and delivery were to be concurrent acts within the fourteen days.⁹—A carrier is bound

re, 2 Story, 503; *Salter v. Burt*, 20 Wend. 205; see fully, *supra*, § 575. In *Wood v. Cool*, 4 Met. 203, Shaw, C. J., stated the law to be in the United States, “In the absence of all proof of particular contract or special custom three days of grace are allowed on bills of exchange and promissory notes; and when it is relied upon that by special custom no grace is allowed, or any other term of grace than three days, it is an exception to the general rule, and the proof lies on the party taking it.” But this does not apply to paper payable on demand, as has been just seen, nor to cheques on banks. *Bowen v. Newell*, 5 Sandf. 326.

¹ *Farquehar v. Morris*, 7 T. R. 124; see *supra*, § 577.

² *Supra*, § 575.

³ *Supra*, § 576.

⁴ *Supra*, § 577.

⁵ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 685, 695, 701; *Startup v. MacDonald*, 6 M. & G. 611; *Ford v. Cotesworth*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 133; *Jones v. Gibbons*, 8 Exch. 920; *Cocker v. Hemp Co.*, 3 Sumner, 530; *Atwood v. Clark*, 2 Greenl. 249; *Atkinson v. Brown*, 20 Me. 67; *Bailey v. Simonds*, 6 N. H. 159; *Russel v. Ormsbee*, 10 Vt. 274; *Atwood v. Cobb*, 16 Pick. 227; *Wheelock v. Tanner*, 39 N. Y. 481; *Adams v. Adams*, 26 Ala. 272.

⁶ *Ellis v. Thompson*, 3 M. & W. 446; *Cocker v. Hemp Co.*, 3 Sumner, 530; *Davis v. Talloot*, 2 Kern. 184; see *Atwood v. Clark*, 2 Greenl. 249; *Hill v. Hobart*, 16 Me. 164.

⁷ See *Spartali v. Benecke*, 10 C. B. 212.

⁸ *Field v. Lelean*, 6 H. & N. 617; *Wh. on Ev.* §§ 929, 969.

⁹ *Godts v. Rose*, 17 C. B. 229.

to deliver within reasonable time, taking all the circumstances of transportation into consideration.¹ The test of reasonableness, when no time is fixed in the contract, has been also applied to the discharge of the cargo of a ship;² to the providing a cargo under a charter party,³ and to the ejection of a tenant at will.⁴—A contract to marry, also, without fixing the date, is a contract to marry within a reasonable time.⁵—Where a debt is payable in stocks, but no time of delivery is fixed, they should be tendered at once, and if any loss occur through unreasonable delay, this loss is to fall upon the party causing the delay.⁶ Reasonableness, in this relation, has been said to be a question of law.⁷ But when the question depends on the varying circumstances of concrete cases, it is much more a question of business duty than one of law. The law stops with announcing the general rule that the time for performance must be “reasonable.” But what is “reasonable” depends in part on the nature of the goods, in part on the usage of the parties, in part on the conveniences of transportation, in part on the demands of the market, conditions presenting themselves in new aspects in each case, and requiring the question in each case to be settled inductively

¹ *Hales v. R. R.*, 4 B. & S. 66; *Taylor v. R. R.*, L. R. 1 C. P. 385. As to meaning of term “reasonable,” see *Atwood v. Emery*, 1 C. B. N. S. 110; *Toms v. Wilson*, 4 B. & S. 442; *Bass v. White*, 65 N. Y. 565.

² *Ford v. Cotesworth*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 127; and see *Thiis v. Byers*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 249.

³ *Adams v. Mail Co.*, 5 C. B. N. S. 492. For the above citations see *Leake*, 2d ed. 837.

⁴ *Ellis v. Paige*, 1 Pick. 43.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 838; 2 Pars. on Cont. 64; 3 Add. on Cont. 447; *Cherry v. Thompson*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 574; *Caines v. Smith*, 15 M. & W. 189; *Nunan v. Bourquin*, 7 Phil. 239; *Wagenseller v. Simmers*, 97 Penn. St. 465. In this case *Mercur, J.*, said: “A contract to marry without specification of

a time is a contract to marry within a reasonable time. Each party has a right to a reasonable delay; but not to delay without reason or beyond reason. The age of the parties and the pecuniary ability of the man to support a family, are proper matters to consider in the reasonableness of the delay in a particular case.” That a person disabling himself from marrying cannot on this ground defend himself on a suit for damages, see *supra*, § 324; *infra*, § 885a; and that in such case no demand is necessary, see *supra*, §§ 575, 606.

⁶ *Demarest v. McKee*, 2 Grant (Penn.) 248.

⁷ 2 Pars. on Cont. 661, citing *Stodden v. Harvey*, Cro. Jac. 204; *Atwood v. Clark*, 2 Greenl. 249; *Porter v. Blood*, 5 Pick. 54; *Murray v. Smith*, 1 Hawks. 41.

from all the facts.¹—Parol evidence is admissible of the facts and circumstances attending the sale in order to determine what is a reasonable time;² but not to show that a specific day was intended when this contradicts the contract, unless mutual mistake be shown.³

§ 882 *a*. We have already seen⁴ that demand may be a condition of contracts of bailment or sale. We have now to observe that when goods are to be delivered on demand, the demand must be at the time and place designated, and, where there is no designation, at a reasonable time and place.⁵ The demand may be made on the debtor's agent in the debtor's absence.⁶ And the demand, so far as its contents are concerned, must be reasonable, and must conform to the contract.⁷

§ 883. When a place is fixed for the performance of a contract, but no specific time is designated, then the promisor must notify the promisee when he proposes to attend at the specified place for the purpose of performance. When the day as well as the place is designated, "the law appoints the last convenient time of the day for both to attend for the purpose, and the promisor may protect himself from default by being then present at the place, prepared to pay or perform his contract; but it is also sufficient for him to tender the payment or performance at the place, if the promisee should happen to be there, at any time upon the day appointed."⁸ But when the contract provides for the payment, at a designated place, of certain articles

¹ See *Taylor v. R. R.*, L. R. 1 C. P. 385; *Ellis v. Thompson*, 3 M. & W. 445; *Howe v. Huntingdon*, 15 Me. 350; *Green v. Dingley*, 24 Me. 131; *Cameron v. Wells*, 30 Vt. 633; *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 Pen. & W. 63; *Murray v. Smith*, 1 Hawks. 41; *Boyd v. Gunnison*, 14 W. Va. 1; *Philips v. Morrison*, 3 Bibb, 105.

² *Ellis v. Thompson*, 3 M. & W. 445; *Jones v. Gibbins*, 8 Ex. 920; *Cocker v. Hemp Co.*, 3 Sumn. 530; *Coates v. Sangston*, 5 Md. 121.

³ *Cocker v. Hemp Co.*, 3 Sumn. 530; *Atwood v. Cobb*, 16 Pick. 227.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 575 *et seq.*

⁵ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1206; *Dunn v. Marston*, 34 Me. 382; *Higgins v. Emmons*, 5 Conn. 76; *Rice v. Churchill*, 2 Denio, 145.

⁶ *Mason v. Briggs*, 16 Mass. 453; *Rice v. Churchill*, 2 Denio, 145; *infra*, §§ 982 *et seq.*

⁷ *Vance v. Bloomer*, 20 Wend. 196.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 835; citing *Co. Lit.* 202 *a*, 211 *a*; *Wade's case*, 5 Co. 114 *a*; *Myers v. De Mier*, 52 N. Y. 647.

to be chosen by the promisee, but no time is fixed for payment in the contract, the payment is to be on demand.¹

§ 884. The full limit of time specified for performance is allowed to the party from whom the performance is due.² Thus the acceptor of a bill of exchange has the whole day on which the bill becomes due to make payment; and though it may be presented for payment at any time during business hours of that day, and if refused, may be treated as dishonored, and notice given accordingly, yet if payment be tendered at any time during the day, the dishonor and notice will be avoided.³ And where a party has a month in which to perform a contract, suit cannot be brought against him for non-performance until that month is expired.⁴ And a contract to deliver coal within the last fourteen days of March, is satisfied by a tender on the last business hour on the thirty-first of March.⁵—A contract to deliver oil, “buyer’s option, at any time from this to December 31st,” gives the seller the whole of December 31st for performance.⁶

When time is fixed for performance, full limit allowed.

§ 885. When goods are to be delivered within a certain period, the vendor may deliver on the last day of that period, at the latest business hour, though the purchaser will not be obliged to attend at his store at an unreasonable hour for the purpose of receiving the goods.⁷—As a general rule, the performance of a business contract

Last business hour permissible

¹ Russell v. Ormsbee, 10 Vt. 274.

² See *infra*, § 895.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 834; Leftley v. Mills, 4 T. R. 170; Burbridge v. Mannors, 3 Camp. 193.

⁴ Harris v. Blen, 16 Me. 175; see Oatman v. Walker, 33 Me. 67; Erskine v. Erskine, 13 N. H. 436; as to meaning of month, see *infra*, § 896.

⁵ Startup v. MacDonald, 6 M. & G. 593; see *infra*, § 895.

⁶ Conawingo Co. v. Cunningham, 75 Penn. St. 138; Cleveland v. Sterrett, 70 Penn. St. 204.

⁷ *Infra*, § 980; Startup v. McDonald,

6 M. & G. 593. See Leigh v. Paterson, 8 Taunt. 540, in which it was held that where the delivery was to be in “all December,” the vendor had the whole month in which to deliver, and that the damages on non-delivery were to be assessed at the value of the goods on the last day of the month. In Sweet v. Harding, 19 Vt. 587, a separation of grain payable “in January,” was held too late when made in the evening of the last day of January, though in the place designated, the purchaser not being notified.

may be delayed to the last business hour of the day;¹ that of a personal service at any hour before midnight.²

¹ *Savary v. Goe*, 3 Wash. C. C. 140; *Aldrich v. Albee*, 1 Greenl. 120; *Tierman v. Napier*, 5 Yerg. 410. See *infra*, § 980.

² *Thomas v. Hayden*, cited 19 Vt. 589; but see *Sweet v. Harding*, 19 Vt. 587.

In *Startup v. Macdonald*, 6 M. & G. 625, Parke, B., said: "Where a thing is to be done *anywhere*, a tender at a convenient time before midnight is sufficient; where the tender is to be done *in a particular place*, and where the law implies a duty on the party to whom the thing is to be done to attend, that attendance is to be by daylight, and a convenient time before sunset."

In *Croninger v. Crocker*, 62 N. Y. 151, the agreement was to furnish hogs to be delivered "the first half of August, 1871, to be weighed at G.'s scales near B. It was held that the delivery was to be at the scales, and might be deferred until the 16th of August, down to the noon of which day the hogs should be kept at the scales; and that it was not enough for the hogs to be at the scales a part of the forenoon of that day."

In *Bass v. White*, 65 N. Y. 565, the price of a load of coal was to be paid on receipt of a bill of lading, which was presented in New York on Saturday, five minutes before three o'clock. Some discussion arose as to a set-off, by which the parties were detained until after three o'clock. The plaintiffs then offered a cheque for the purchase-money, which the defendants declined to take, on the ground that it was too late for banking hours. It was held that the plaintiffs' tender on the succeeding Monday morning was in time.

And see *infra*, § 980.

That fractions of a day will be recog-

nized in cases where this is required by substantial justice was ruled by the supreme court of the United States in 1882, in *Louisville v. Savings Bank*, 13 Rep. 193; and it was consequently held that the second section of article fourteen of the Illinois constitution, prohibiting railroad donations by municipalities, which went into operation on July 2, 1870, did not invalidate municipal bonds issued on behalf of a railroad corporation, pursuant to an election held on that day at an hour prior to the closing of the polls of the general election at which the people of the state voted on the adoption of the constitution; the bonds, so issued, to be applied in discharge of a donation voted in 1868 to be paid by special tax. In the opinion of the court, Harlan, J., adopted the following from Lawrence, J., in *Grosvenor v. Magill*, 37 Ill. 240: "It is true that for many purposes the law knows no division of a day; but whenever it becomes important to the ends of justice, or in order to decide upon conflicting interests, the law will look into fractions of a day as readily as into the fractions of any other unit of time. 2 Blackst. Com. 140, notes. The rule is purely one of convenience, which must give way whenever the rights of parties require it. There is no indivisible unity about a day which forbids us, in legal proceedings, to consider its component hours, any more than about a month, which restrains us from regarding its constituent days. The law is not made of such unreasonable and arbitrary rules." "The views expressed in the last case," continues Harlan, J., "are consistent with sound reason and public policy. They accord with our own judgment, and are in line with the

§ 885 a. A promisor, by absolutely putting it out of his power to fulfil a contract entered into by him, may make himself liable, without demand, from the time he thus incapacitates himself, even though the time for performance has not yet arrived.¹ He may, for instance, expressly repudiate the contract, in which case he may be at once sued,² though the other party, if electing to sue immediately for the repudiation, cannot afterwards insist on the performance.³ A party, also, disabling himself by selling to B. an estate he has agreed to convey next month to A., may be sued at once by A.⁴ And a party disabling himself from marriage to A. (to whom he is engaged), by marrying B., may be sued by A. without prior demand.⁵ It has also been held that on a contract to sell to the plaintiff all the starch manufactured by the defendant within a year, an action will lie immediately on a breach, without waiting for the expiration of a year.⁶—As will be hereafter seen, the delivery of goods may be conditioned on the supply of material by the other party,⁷ and so of a covenant to repair.⁸—“It may also be observed,” to adopt the words of a learned federal judge in 1882, “that in contracts for services, for marriage, for deliveries of merchandise, if the principal, before the time for performance arrives, renounces

Party by disabling himself or refusing may make himself liable to suit before day fixed.

settled course of decisions in other courts. *Arnold v. United States*, 9 Cranch, 119; *Richardson's case*, 2 Story, 571; *Lapeyre v. United States*, 17 Wall. 198; *United States v. Norton*, 97 U. S. 170; *Burgess v. Salmon*, ib. 381; *Kennedy v. Palmer*, 6 Gray, 316; *People v. Clark*, 1 Cal. 406; *Roe dem. Wrangham v. Hersey*, 3 Wils. 274; *Combe v. Pitt*, 3 Burr. 1423, 1434.”

¹ See 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1067, where this topic is fully discussed; and see *Johnston v. Caulkins*, 1 John. Cas. 116, and cases cited *supra*, §§ 312, 668, 716, on analogous questions. See, also, as sustaining the text, *Lovelock v. Franklyn*, 8 Q. B. 371; and see *New England Ins. Co. v.*

Butler, 34 Me. 451; *Hammett v. Brown*, 60 Ala. 498; *Wolf v. Marsh*, 54 Cal. 228.

² *Hochster v. De la Tour*, 2 E. & B. 678; *Avery v. Bowden*, 5 E. & B. 714; *Wilkinson v. Verity*, L. R. 6 C. P. 206.

³ *Avery v. Bowden*, 5 E. & B. 714; *Reid v. Hoskins*, 5 E. & B. 729; *supra*, § 290.

⁴ 1 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1067; citing 1 Roll. Abr. 248; *Co. Litt.* 220 b; *Ford v. Tiley*, 6 B. & C. 325; *Trask v. Vinton*, 20 Pick. 111; *Heard v. Bowers*, 23 Pick. 455.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 575, 606.

⁶ *Hubbert v. Borden*, 6 Whart. 79.

⁷ *Supra*, § 585.

⁸ *Supra*, § 586.

the contract, an immediate action will lie."¹ This rule, however, is not applicable to commercial paper, whose maturity cannot in this way be anticipated.²

§ 886. Terms settling time are to be construed according to context. "Forthwith," when used independently, means such promptness as under the circumstances is reasonable.³ On the other hand, where it was provided that bonds should be given mutually within ten days for securing the contract, and the performance was to be "forthwith," it was held that "forthwith" did not mean "immediately," but that the giving of the bonds was a condition precedent to the performance.⁴ But the delivery of the goods is a condition precedent to payment in a contract which provides that the goods are to be delivered "forthwith," the price to be paid within fourteen days from the date of the contract.⁵—Where a manufacturer agrees to deliver goods "as soon as possible" to the purchaser, this was ruled to mean as soon as this could be done in view of the fact that the goods had to be manufactured, and that delivery was to be according to priority. And where a written order by a cooper for iron hoops was sent to the manufacturer on the 30th of November, it was held that it was complied with by a tender in the following February.⁶—"Directly," when used by itself, and not as indicating de-

¹ Lowell, J., *Dingley v. Oler*, 11 Fed. Rep. 373, citing *Hochster v. De la Tour*, 2 E. & B. 678; *Frost v. Knight*, L. R. 7 Ex. 111; *Howard v. Daley*, 61 N. Y. 362; *Fox v. Kitton*, 19 Ill. 519; *Holloway v. Griffith*, 32 Iowa, 409. See, however, as exhibiting exceptions to rule, opinion of Judge Wells in *Daniels v. Newton*, 114 Mass. 530.—It does not follow, however, because a party has renounced a contract, thereby enabling suit to be brought on it before its maturity, that damages are to be adjusted to the time of renouncing. If a vendor, for instance, had an option of delivery later, and the price falls at the time of the option, the price at such date is all that the vendee can recover on a suit

for damages for non-performance. *Dingley v. Oler*, *supra*.

² *Ibid*.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 839, citing *Sullivan ex parte*, 36 L. J. B. 1; *Hudson v. Hill*, 43 L. J. C. P. 273.

⁴ *Roberts v. Brett*, 11 H. L. Cas. 337.

⁵ *Staunton v. Wood*, 16 Q. B. 638; see *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 687; *Isaacs v. Plaster Works*, 67 N. Y. 124. As to when payment is conditioned on delivery, see *supra*, §§ 575 *et seq*.

⁶ *Atwood v. Emery*, 1 C. B. N. S. 110; see *Hydraulic Engineer Co. v. McHaffie*, L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 670; *De Oleaga v. West Cumb. Iron Co.*, L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 472.

pendence on another event, requires immediate despatch.¹ But the strongest terms calling for promptitude will be construed to involve the condition of reasonableness, unless the emergency be such as to make any delay hazardous.² Even where a bill of sale provided that the payment should be "instantly on demand, and without delay on any pretence whatsoever," this was held not to require a suspension of all other duties so as to hurry off a payment, the debtor, in case of absence, being entitled to reasonable time to receive notice and respond.³

§ 887. Cases, however, frequently occur in which it is essential to the fair carrying out of a contract that certain stipulations as to time should be observed.⁴ Thus, when it is provided that objections to title must be submitted within a specified period after the delivery of the abstract, a party cannot hold back his objections, and then spring them after the time allotted;⁵ though the vendor may waive this stipulation by laches on his part, or by receiving objections after the designated period.⁶ There may also be circumstances attending an engagement to deliver possession on a certain day, which may make it essential and make a breach in this respect fatal in equity as well as in law;⁷ as where there is material fluctuation in prices, and prompt action is necessary to enable the bargain to be duly carried out.⁸ When, also, a punctual de-

Time may be of essence, and if so, stipulations enforcing it will be compelled.

¹ *Duncan v. Topham*, 8 C. B. 225.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 840, citing *Atwood v. Emery*, 1 C. B. N. S. 110; *Brighty v. Norton*, 3 B. & S. 305; *Toms v. Wilson*, 4 B. & S. 455; *Jackson v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 10 C. P. 125.

³ *Massey v. Sladen*, L. R. 4 Ex. 13; *Trevor ex parte*, L. R. 1 C. D. 297. See *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 709.

⁴ *Supra*, § 203; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 593; 1 Sug. V. & P. (8th Am. ed.) 411; *Bispham's Eq.* (2d ed.) § 392; *Patrick v. Milner*, 2 C. P. D. 342; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheat. 533; *Snowman v. Harford*, 55 Me. 197; *Goldsmith v. Guild*, 10 Allen, 239; *Wells*

v. Smith, 7 Paige, 22; *Dominick v. Michael*, 4 Sandf. 426; *Griggs v. Landis*, 21 N. J. Eq. 494; *Bellas v. Hays*, 5 S. & R. 427.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 348; *Oakden v. Pike*, 34 L. J. C. 620; see generally *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 Pet. 172; *Scott v. Fields*, 7 Ohio, pt. ii. 90; *Scarlett v. Stein*, 40 Md. 512.

⁶ *Upperton v. Nickolson*, L. R. 6 Ch. 436; *Want v. Stallibrass*, L. R. 8 Ex. 175; *Cutts v. Thoday*, 13 Sim. 206.

⁷ See *Boehm v. Wood*, 1 J. & W. 419; *Goldsmith v. Guild*, 10 Allen, 239.

⁸ *Claydon v. Green*, L. R. 3 C. P. 511; *Richmond v. Gray*, 3 Allen, 30.

livery of property sold is essential to its utilization by the purchaser, the vendor, by delay in delivery, may lose his right to enforce his bargain.¹ Such, also, is the case with the sale of a residence, possession to be delivered on a particular day, and the purchaser waiting to come in;² with the sale of a public house, when it is stipulated that the license is to be transferred simultaneously with possession, and the license is essential to the working of the house;³ with business engagements, whose success necessarily depends on promptitude;⁴ with sales of leaseholds and mining property, whose value time necessarily depreciates;⁵ with sales of annuities;⁶ with sales of leases for lives;⁷ with sales of land as business security;⁸ with sales of reversionary interests;⁹ and with sales of stocks which are subject to market fluctuations.¹⁰ And in all cases where by contract an option is reserved to a party to accept a thing at a particular time, time is of the essence of the contract, as otherwise the vendor would be the trustee of the purchaser.¹¹

§ 888. The construction given in equity to stipulations as to time is the same as that given in law. When time is an essential element in a contract, the same rules that would be applied to its determination in law will be applied in equity.¹² Thus, in a case in

Construction of time in equity same as in law.

¹ *Wright v. Howard*, 1 Sim. & S. 190; *Nokes v. Kilmory*, 1 D. & Sm. 444; *McKay v. Carrington*, 1 McLean, 50.

² *Tilly v. Thomas*, L. R. 3 Ch. 61; *Webb v. Hughes*, L. R. 10 Eq. 281.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 849; *Coslake v. Till*, 1 Russ. 376; *Day v. Luhke*, L. R. 5 Eq. 336; *Cowles v. Gales*, L. R. 7 Ch. 12; *Claydon v. Green*, L. R. 3 C. P. 511.

⁴ *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheat. 528; *Becker v. Smith*, 59 Penn. St. 469; *Benninger v. Hanke*, 61 Penn. St. 343; *Parshall's App.*, 65 Penn. St. 224; *Cleveland v. Sterrett*, 70 Penn. St. 204; *Hewson v. Paxson*, Sup. Ct. Penn. 1881; *Stow v. Russell*, 36 Ill. 18.

⁵ *Mackbryde v. Weekes*, 22 Beav. 533; *Hudson v. Temple*, 29 Beav. 536.

⁶ *Withy v. Cottle*, T. & R. 78.

⁷ *Wheeler v. D'Esterre*, 2 Dow. 359; see *Noonan v. Orton*, 21 Wis. 283.

⁸ *McKay v. Carrington*, 1 McL. 59.

⁹ *Newman v. Rogers*, 4 Bro. C. C. 391.

¹⁰ *Leake*, 2d ed. 849; *Doloret v. Rothschild*, 1 Sim. & S. 590; *Campbell v. R. R.*, 5 Hare, 519.

¹¹ *Ranelagh v. Melton*, 2 Dr. & S. 278; see *supra*, § 203; *Banks v. Haskie*, 45 Md. 209; *Prestman v. Silljacks*, 14 Rep. 331.

¹² *Lloyd v. Collett*, 4 Br. C. C. 469; *Roberts v. Berry*, 3 D. M. & G. 284; *Tilley v. Thomas*, L. R. 3 Ch. 67; *Hepburn v. Auld*, 5 Cranch, 262; *Brashier v. Gratz*, 6 Wheat. 528; *Taylor v. Longworth*, 14 Pet. 172; *Eastman v. Plumer*, 46 N. H. 464; *Wiswall v. McGown*, 2 Barb. 270; *Merritt v.*

Pennsylvania in 1881, the plaintiff sued on the following instrument: "In settlement of the claim of Hon. E. M. P., executor . . . against me for \$2282.50, and interest from Jan. 15, 1875, I hereby agree to pay to said executor the sum of \$1000 and interest from said Jan. 15, 1875, within twenty days from this date. It being distinctly understood that if I do not pay said \$1000 and interest punctually, as above stated, the whole demand of \$2282.50 and interest shall be paid . . . A. H. Phila. Oct. 21, 1879." It was held that on a failure to pay the sum of \$1000 at the time designated, the whole demand became due.¹—"The construction is and must be in equity the same as in a court of law. A court of equity will, indeed, relieve against and enforce specific performance, notwithstanding a failure to keep the dates assigned by the contract, either for completion or for steps towards completion, if it can do justice between the parties. This is what is meant when it is said that in equity time is not of the essence of the contract."² On the other hand, a court of equity will not refuse specific performance because of some technical want of punctuality in the complainant in performing a condition precedent.³ Hence, in contracts for the conveyance of

Brown, 6 C. E. Green, 401; King v. Ruckman, 6 C. E. Green, 599.

¹ Mercur, J., in delivering the opinion of the court, said: "In the agreement of October 21, 1879, there is a distinct admission of a settlement in which there was found due from the plaintiff in error a sum specified, with an implied agreement of the executor to accept a smaller sum in satisfaction of the larger in case the smaller should be paid at a day specified, time being made the essence of the agreement. Time is not generally of the essence of a contract, but may be made so by express agreement or plainly indicated by the attending circumstances. D'Arras v. Keyser, 2 Casey, 249; Shaw v. Turnpike Co., 2 P. & W. 454. Where time is made of the essence of

a contract, equity will not grant relief against an omission to pay or perform on the day. Shaw v. Turnpike Co., *supra*; Patchin v. Lamborn, 7 Casey, 314; Chew v. Phillippi, 8 ib. 205; Waters v. Waters, ib. 307; Becker v. Smith, 9 P. F. S. 469; Reed v. Breeden, 11 ib. 460; Parshall's Appeal, 15 ib. 224." Hewson v. Paxon, 12 Rep. 313.

² Cairns, L. J., Tilley v. Thomas, L. R. 3 Ch. 67; Bisph. Eq. 2d ed. § 391; see Barnard v. Lee, 97 Mass. 92; Dresel v. Jordan, 104 Mass. 415; King v. Ruckman, 5 C. E. Green, 316; Brock v. Hidy, 13 Oh. St. 306; Jackson v. Ligon, 3 Leigh, 161.

³ See *supra*, §§ 607, 869; Leake, 2d ed. 846; Roberts v. Berry, 3 D. M. & G. 284; Webb v. Hughes, L. R. 10 Eq. 281; Barnard v. Lee, 97 Mass. 92;

land, time will not, unless there is some material interest dependent upon punctuality, be regarded as essential, and conveyances will be compelled, though there may have been a failure on the plaintiff's part to comply with some preliminary condition as to time.¹ A failure, also, to comply with the condition that the vendor shall deliver an abstract of title within a certain time will not entitle the purchaser to throw up the contract.² A similar rule is adopted as to mortgages, which, in equity, are not regarded as absolute conveyances, but which are securities for the payment of debts. Even though the time for redemption is past, a court of equity will decree satisfaction or reconveyance, as the case may be, on payment of principal and interest.³

§ 889. The parties may, also, by agreement provide that, unless an article be delivered or labor done by a specific time, there shall be no compensation; and, when the time goes to the substance of the contract, this is a bar to the suit.⁴ Contracts for developing mines, in which the value of the contract depends upon prompt action, are illustrations of the rule that time may become essential, from the circumstances of the case.⁵

Benedict v. Lynch, 1 Johns. Ch. 375; *Huffmann v. Hummer*, 17 N. J. Eq. 263; *Stow v. Russel*, 36 Ill. 18; *Bomier v. Caldwell*, 8 Mich. 463; *Steele v. Branch*, 40 Cal. 3.

¹ *Leake*, 2d ed. 846; *Bisph. Eq.* 2d ed. § 393; *Seton v. Slade*, 7 Ves. 274, and notes to same in 2 Wh. & Tud. L. C.; *Parkin v. Sherold*, 16 Beav. 59; *Webb v. Hughes*, L. R. 10 Eq. 281; *Patrick v. Milner*, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 342; *Barnard v. Lee*, 97 Mass. 94; *Ives v. Armstrong*, 5 R. I. 567; *King v. Ruckman*, 5 C. E. Green, 316; S. C., 6 C. E. Green, 599; *Patchin v. Lamborn*, 31 Penn. St. 314; *Stow v. Russell*, 36 Ill. 18. Otherwise in cases of wilful neglect. *Banks v. Haskie*, 45 Md. 209; *Prestman v. Silljacks*, 14 Rep. 331.

² *Seton v. Slade*, 7 Ves. 274; *Rob-*

erts v. Berry, 3 D. M. & G. 284. See generally *Snowman v. Harford*, 55 Me. 197; *Edgerton v. Peckham*, 11 Paige, 352; *Tiernan v. Roland*, 15 Penn. St. 429.

³ *Bispham's Eq.* §§ 364, 389; *Seton v. Slade*, 7 Ves. 273; *Egmont v. Smith*, L. R. 6 Ch. D. 475; *Malin v. Malin*, 1 Wend. 625; *King v. Ruckman*, 6 C. E. Green, 599; *Brewer v. Fleming*, 51 Penn. St. 113; *Napin v. Darlington*, 70 Penn. St. 64.

⁴ *Ripley v. Maclure*, 4 Ex. 345; *Westerman v. Means*, 12 Penn. St. 97; *Barnard v. Lee*, 97 Mass. 94; *Wiswall v. McGown*, 2 Barb. 270; *Kemp v. Humphreys*, 13 Ill. 573.

⁵ *Bisph. Eq.* 2d ed. § 393; *Macbryde v. Weekes*, 22 Beav. 533; *Parker v. Frith*, 1 Sim. & St. 199, n.

§ 890. A party who has himself encouraged delay, or who has been otherwise negligent, cannot inflict on another a forfeiture consequent on the latter failing to come up to time.¹ The extension of negotiations by one party beyond the time fixed precludes him from taking advantage of the delay of the other party, so far as that delay is not excessive.² Thus, in a case in Connecticut in 1880, a purchaser of land at \$700, having failed to pay at the date stipulated, afterwards made payments from time to time, which were accepted by the vendor without objection, until nearly a year after the date, when only ten dollars remained due, which sum was then tendered but refused. It was held that it was then too late for the vendor to refuse specific performance on the ground that time was of the essence of the contract.³ On the other hand, a party who delusively institutes a negotiation which he intends to be fruitless cannot set up the negotiation as precluding the other party from insisting on his rights.⁴ And, when negotiations have ceased, they cannot be set up as excusing either party from the liabilities imposed on him, though a party may by delay, after the closing of negotiations, preclude himself from claiming specific performance.⁵

Forfeiture from lapse of time cannot be exacted by dilatory party.

§ 891. Unless, also, punctuality goes to the substance of an engagement, a failure to keep time is waived by an acceptance of the goods or services; and if the promisee has sustained any loss by the delay as to time, he must prove it as a matter of set-off, or use it to sustain a cross-action, as the local practice may require.⁶

Punctuality waived by acceptance.

¹ Gardner *ex parte*, 4 Y. & C. Ex. 503; Taylor v. Longworth, 14 Pet. 172; Rogers v. Saunders, 16 Me. 92; Eastman v. Plumer, 46 N. H. 464; Benedict v. Lynch, 1 Johns. Ch. 370; Merritt v. Brown, 6 C. E. Green, 401; Johns v. Norris, 7 C. E. Green, 102; see generally *supra*, §§ 312, 325, 603.

² Hudson v. Bartram, 3 Madd. 440; Wood v. Bernal, 19 Ves. 220; McMurray v. Spicer, L. R. 5 Eq. 529; Webb v. Hughes, L. R. 10 Eq. 281; cited Leake, 2d ed. 850; Flagg v. Dryden,

7 Pick. 52; Benedict v. Lynch, 1 Johns. Ch. 375; Lounsbury v. Bank, 46 Conn. 291; Leaird v. Smith, 44 N. Y. 618; Bass v. White, 65 N. Y. 565.

³ Lounsbury v. Beebe, 46 Conn. 291.

⁴ Gee v. Pearse, 2 De G. & Sm. 325.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 850; Alley v. Deschamps, 13 Ves. 225; Heaphy v. Hill, 2 Sim. & S. 29; Eads v. Williams, 4 D. M. & G. 691; Pollard v. Clayton, 1 K. & J. 462.

⁶ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 320; Lucas v. Godwin, 3 Bing. N. C. 737;

As we have just seen, also, continued negotiations, after a failure in punctuality, waive the laches;¹ and so of any form of acceptance after breach.²

§ 892. Even when time is not on the face of a contract essential, it may become so by one party notifying the other that it is essential that a thing required to be done by the contract should be done on a particular day, supposing that this notice is reasonable.³

Time may
by notice be
made es-
sential.

But the notice, to have this effect, must be unequivocal, and must declare that the contract will be abandoned if not performed on that day.⁴ And when a contract provides that the promisor shall perform his promise on notice from the promisee, then notice is essential to the maturing of the duty.⁵

§ 893. Obligatory documents, including negotiable papers, bonds, and deeds, are presumed to have been delivered on the date they bear.⁶ But extrinsic evidence is admissible to prove that the date either of execution or of delivery is not that set forth in the document.⁷ And the presumption does not extend to

Nominal
date pre-
sumed to
be real.

Lindsey v. Gordon, 13 Me. 60; *Warren v. Mains*, 7 Johns. 476; *Church v. Feterow*, 3 Pen. & W. 301; *Choice v. Moseley*, 1 Bailey, 136; *Lawrence v. Dougherty*, 5 Yerg. 435; *Miller v. McClain*, 10 Yerg. 245. For waiver of conditions, see *supra*, §§ 602-4.

¹ *Webb v. Hughes*, L. R. 10 Eq. 281; and cases cited *supra*, § 890.

² *Flagg v. Dryden*, 7 Pick. 52; and cases cited *supra*, § 890.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 851; *Dart, V. & P.* 418; *Taylor v. Brown*, 2 Beav. 180; *Benson v. Lamb*, 9 Beav. 502; *Parkin v. Therold*, 16 Beav. 59; *Nott v. Riccard*, 22 Beav. 307; *McMurray v. Spicer*, L. R. 5 Eq. 527; *Crawford v. Toogood*, L. R. 13 Ch. D. 153; *Barnard v. Lee*, 97 Mass. 94; *Ives v. Armstrong*, 5 R. I. 567; *King v. Ruckman*, 5 C. E. Green, 316; *S. C.*, 6 C. E. Green, 599; *Thompson v. Dullas*, 5 Rich. Eq. 370.

⁴ *Reynolds v. Nelson*, 6 Madd. 18; see *Webb v. Hughes*, L. R. 10 Eq. 281.

⁵ *Hodsdon v. Harridge*, 2 Wms. Sann. 62 a, n.; see fully, *supra*, §§ 567 *et seq.*

⁶ *Wh. on Ev.* § 977; *Leake*, 2d ed. 844; *Hunt v. Massey*, 5 B. & Ad. 902; *Sinclair v. Baggaley*, 4 M. & W. 312; *Anderson v. Weston*, 6 Bing. N. C. 296; *Fowler v. Melville*, 11 How. U. S. 375; *Smith v. Porter*, 10 Gray, 66; *Costigan v. Gould*, 5 Denio, 290; *Livingston v. Arnoux*, 56 N. Y. 518; *Claridge v. Klett*, 15 Penn. St. 255; *Meadows v. Cozart*, 76 N. C. 450.

⁷ *Wh. on Ev.* § 977; *Butler v. Mountgarrett*, 7 H. of L. C. 633; *Hall v. Cazenave*, 4 East, 477; *Cooper v. Robinson*, 10 M. & W. 694; *Sweetser v. Lowell*, 33 Me. 446; *Clark v. Houghton*, 12 Gray, 38; *Draper v. Snow*, 20 N. Y. 331; *Serviss v. Stockstill*, 30 Oh. St. 418.

third parties.¹ When there is no date, the time of execution and delivery is provable by parol; but where there is no parol proof, the instrument (*e. g.*, a bill of exchange) dates from the day in which it is drawn.² And when a thing is to be done "ten days from the date," and the contract is not executed until twenty days after date, then the time of the execution of the contract will be taken as the starting point.³

§ 894. The date at which a lease begins is determinable by the context.⁴ When the term is declared to begin "with the making hereof," or "from henceforth," without reference to any date given in the body of the document, the term begins on the day of execution and delivery, including that day; if the term begins "*from* the making hereof," or "*from* the day of delivery," then the day of making or of delivery is excluded.⁵

Date of beginning of lease determined by context.

§ 895. When a liability is to begin at a specific day (*e. g.*, rent from Jan. 1st), and to end after the lapse of a designated time from that date (*e. g.*, one year from Jan. 1st), then the first day is excluded and the last day included in the period of liability.⁶ "The general understanding is, that terms of years last during the whole anniversary of the day from which they are granted. If this were otherwise, the last day, on which the rent is almost uniformly made payable, would be posterior to the lease."⁷ A term of service, however, will be construed to begin on a designated day, so as to include that

When liability continues from one specified day to another, the first is excluded, and the last is included.

¹ *Larns v. Rand*, 3 C. B. N. S. 442.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 844; *Hague v. French*, 3 B. & P. 173; *Giles v. Browne*, 6 M. & S. 73.

³ *Styles v. Wardle*, 4 B. & C. 908.

⁴ *Steele v. Mart*, 4 B. & C. 272; *Sandill v. Franklin*, L. R. 10 C. P. 377.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 843; citing *Co. Lit.* 46 b; *Clayton's case*, 5 Co. 1; *Jaques v. Millar*, L. R. 6 C. D. 153.

⁶ *Leake*, 2d ed. 841; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 684; *Lester v. Garland*, 15 Ves. 257; *Gorst v. Lowndes*, 11 Sim. 434; *Robinson v. Waddington*,

13 Q. B. 753; *Webb v. Fairmaner*, 3 M. & W. 473; *Young v. Higgins*, 6 M. & W. 49; *Isaacs v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 5 Ex. 296; *Oatman v. Walker*, 33 Me. 71; *Blake v. Crowninshield*, 9 N. H. 304; *Bigelow v. Wilson*, 1 Pick. 485; *Farwell v. Rogers*, 4 Cush. 460; *Sands v. Lyon*, 18 Conn. 28; *Weeks v. Hull*, 19 Conn. 376; *Cornell v. Moulton*, 3 Denio, 12; *Thomas v. Afflick*, 16 Penn. St. 14; *Cleveland v. Sterritt*, 70 Penn. St. 204; and see *Buttrick v. Holden*, 8 Cush. 233; *supra*, § 884.

⁷ *Per cur.* *Ackland v. Lutley*, 9 A. & E. 879; cited *Leake*, 2d ed. 841.

day, if such appears to have been intended by the parties;¹ though ordinarily when service is to begin from the first of the month, it excludes that day.² Notice to be given at a specific time after an event does not begin to run until the day after the event;³ notice of action, or notice to quit, or, in general, any notice on which a claim is conditioned, dates, when a specific lapse of time is required, from the day after the date.⁴ When goods are to be paid for in a month, the day of the bargain is not to be counted in.⁵ A policy of insurance, also, "from 14th February to 14th August," includes the fourteenth of August, on which day a fire takes place.⁶ But where a policy of insurance covered goods to be shipped between "February 1st and July 15th," it was held not to include goods shipped on July 15th.⁷—It has been held in Pennsylvania, that a contract to complete a work "by the month of November," requires the work to be done before November sets in.⁸

§ 896. In mercantile obligations, "month," by the custom of merchants, means "calendar" month.⁹ In other contracts,

¹ *Pugh v. Leeds*, 2 Cowp. 714; *Bigelow v. Wilson*, 1 Pick. 485.

² *Wilkinson v. Gaston*, 9 Q. B. 137.

³ *Pellew v. Wonford*, 9 B. & C. 134.

⁴ *Leake*, 2d ed. 842; *Young v. Higgon*, 6 M. & W. 49; *Freeman v. Read*, 4 B. & S. 174. As to notice as a condition precedent, see *supra*, §§ 567 *et seq.* That the day of the performance of a particular condition precedent is to be excluded from the calculation, see cases cited above, and *Blake v. Crowinshield*, 9 N. H. 304; *Bigelow v. Wilson*, 1 Pick. 485; *Wiggin v. Peter*, 1 Met. 127; *Weeks v. Hull*, 19 Conn. 376; *Cornell v. Moulton*, 3 Denio, 12; *Bissell v. Bissell*, 11 Barb. 96; *Thomas v. Afflick*, 16 Penn. St. 14.

⁵ *Webb v. Fairmaner*, 3 M. & W. 473; *Weeks v. Hull*, 19 Conn. 376; *Judd v. Fulton*, 10 Barb. 117; *Bissell v. Bissell*, 11 Barb. 96; *Cornell v. Moulton*, 3 Denio, 12; *Thomas v. Afflick*, 16 Penn. St. 14.

⁶ *Isaacs v. Ins. Co.*, L. R. 5 Ex. 296.

⁷ *Atkyns v. Ins. Co.*, 5 Met. 439.

⁸ *Rankin v. Woodworth*, 3 P. & W. 48; see *Miller v. Phillips*, 31 Penn. St. 221. The court of exchequer was equally divided, in *Coddington v. Paleologo*, L. R. 2 Ex. 193, on the question whether, on a contract for the delivery of goods, "delivering on April 17th, complete 8th May," the vendor was required to begin the delivery on April 17th. See *Newby v. Rogers*, 40 Ind. 9. That when a particular time is allotted, the whole time is to be given, see *supra*, §§ 884-5.

⁹ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 684; *Leake*, 2d ed. 844; *Hart v. Middleton*, 2 C. & K. 9; *Lang v. Gale*, 1 M. & S. 111; *R. v. Chawton*, 1 Q. B. 250; *Webb v. Fairmaner*, 3 M. & W. 473; *Churchill v. Bk.*, 19 Pick. 532; *Leffingwell v. White*, 1 John. Ca. 99; *Thomas v. Shoemaker*, 6 Watts & S. 179.

it is held in England, that “‘months’ denote at law ‘lunar months’ unless there is admissible evidence of an intention in the parties using the word to denote ‘calendar month.’”¹ In this country the practice is to take calendar months as the standard in all cases.² In England evidence of custom that the word is used as a calendar month has been held admissible when business contracts are litigated.³—In construing acts of parliament “month” is held, at common law, to mean “lunar” month unless the context shows a calendar month was meant;⁴ though by stat. 13 Vict. c. 21, it is enacted that “in all acts the word ‘month’ shall be taken to mean ‘calendar month.’” And in this country, in legal proceedings, the latter meaning is generally attached.⁵

“Month”
in mercan-
tile con-
tracts
means
“calendar”
month.

§ 897. When the time for the performance of a contract falls on a Sunday, the performance may be tendered on the next Monday.⁶ The same rule is applicable to payments on policies of insurance.⁷ A tender, also, when due on Sunday, may be made on Monday.⁸ But if a contract is to be performed in a certain

When time
falls on
Sunday de-
livery may
be on next
day.

¹ Per cur. *Simpson v. Margitson*, 11 Q. B. 23. To same effect see *Lang v. Gale*, 1 M. & S. 111; *Cockell v. Gray*, 3 B. & B. 186; *R. v. Chawton*, 1 Q. B. 247; *Hutton v. Brown*, 45 L. T. N. S. 343. Thus “month” has been held to mean “lunar month” in an agreement for the hire of furniture at a weekly rental, provided that the first payment should be made on the following Monday, and the succeeding payments on each succeeding Monday, “the said letting on hire to be for the term of twenty-six months from the date of the first payment herein mentioned.” *Hutton v. Brown* *ut supra*.

² Story on Bills, §§ 143, 330; Story on Contracts, § 1328, citing 4 Kent’s Com. Lect. 56, p. 95; *Hunt v. Holden*, 2 Mass. 170; *Avery v. Pixley*, 4 Mass. 460. “In popular language four weeks are called a month, being nearly the

length of the lunar month; a calendar month consists of 28, 29, 30, or 31 days, as the month stands in the calendars or almanacs.” Webster’s Dict. tit. “Month.”

³ Leake, 2d ed. 844; *Simpson v. Margitson*, 11 Q. B. 23; *Jolly v. Young*, 1 Esp. 186; *Cockell v. Gray*, 3 B. & B. 186; *Webb v. Fairmaner*, 3 M. & W. 476.

⁴ *Crooke v. M’Tavish*, 1 Bing. 307.

⁵ *Churchill v. Bank*, 19 Pick. 532.

⁶ *Stebbins v. Leowolf*, 3 Cush. 137; *Hammond v. Ins. Co.*, 10 Gray, 306; *Avery v. Stewart*, 2 Conn. 69; *Sands v. Lyon*, 18 Conn. 18; *Delamater v. Miller*, 1 Cow. 75; *Salter v. Burt*, 20 Wend. 205; *Bass v. White*, 65 N. Y. 565; *Barrett v. Allen*, 10 Ohio, 426.

⁷ *Hammond v. Ins. Co.*, 10 Gray, 306.

⁸ *Barrett v. Allen*, 10 Ohio, 426.

number of days, and this number includes Sundays, they are to be counted in as making up the aggregate; though if the contract matures on a Sunday, the next day is to be that in which the performance is to be exacted.¹ On the other hand, when negotiable paper becomes due on Sunday, the demand should be on the prior Saturday.² “If the last day of grace is on Sunday, the note is payable and the grace expires on the preceding Saturday. And if two holidays should succeed each other, as Sunday on the 24th of December, and Christmas on the 25th of December, the note would be due and payable on the preceding Saturday, the 23d of December.”³

IV. QUANTITY AND QUALITY.

§ 898. When a specific quantity is stipulated for, the purchaser is entitled to demand this quantity. If less
 Quantity stipulated for must be delivered. be delivered he may refuse to receive it; or if a partial delivery be made, with a promise to follow it up by sending the rest, he may return what he has thus received when he finds that the residue will not be delivered in time,⁴ though by accepting a part without objection he disaffirms the entirety of the contract.⁵ Or, if a larger quantity is sent him, and the mass is not readily divisible, he may refuse to accept *in toto*.⁶ If, however, he accept what is delivered to him, whether greater or less than the amount agreed on, then he is liable in goods sold and delivered for what he re-

¹ *Brown v. Johnson*, 10 M. & W. 331; *King v. Dowdell*, 2 Sandf. 131.

² *Story on Contracts*, § 1328; *Story on Notes*, § 220; *Story on Bills*, § 338; *Homes v. Smith*, 20 Me. 284; *Salter v. Burt*, 20 Wend. 205; *Stebbins v. Leowolf*, 3 Cush. 137.

³ *Story on Notes*, 7th ed. (1876), § 220. In *Stebbins v. Leowolf*, 3 Cush. 137, the supreme court of Massachusetts, as the contract before them was by New York parties, and the contract was to be performed in New York, followed what they held to be the New York rule, which is that given in the text, though it was said that the point

was one as to which “there had not been an entire unanimity of decision.”

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 190–1, 259, 293, 579, 601; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 690; *Morgan v. Gath*, 3 H. & C. 748; *Waddington v. Oliver*, 2 B. & P. N. R. 61.

⁵ *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 P. & W. 63.

⁶ *Leake*, 2d ed. 824; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 47, 691; *Cross v. Eglin*, 2 B. & Ad. 106; *Dixon v. Fletcher*, 3 M. & W. 146; *Hart v. Mills*, 15 M. & W. 85; *Levy v. Green*, 8 E. & B. 575; *Rylands v. Kreitman*, 19 C. B. N. S. 351; and see *supra*, §§ 579 *et seq.* That rescission may be granted on failure of part performance, see *supra*, § 293, 580.

ceives.¹ A slight nominal variance in the amount of work done, or of material delivered, when the contract is substantially performed, is no defence.²

§ 899. When a duty is divisible, it may be performed in parts, and the receiver may be chargeable *pro tanto*, and a vendee to whom a part of an order of divisible goods is delivered is liable for what he received, unless he has suffered damage to that amount by the vendor's non-performance.³ Hence on a contract to publish a work in numbers, at so much a number, it has been held that on partial performance there may be partial recovery.⁴ On a contract, also, to deliver two hundred stove patterns, a part only of which were made, it was held that the vendor was entitled to recover on a *quantum meruit* for what was accepted by the vendee, deducting any damages the latter sustained from the non-completion of the contract.⁵—A contract to deliver 50,000 tons of coal in a year, in shipments at the rate of 6000 tons per month, at the buyer's option, on notices to be given on a day specified in each month as to the amount to be delivered in the next month, is divisible; and it has been held that on such a contract, after part performance, the fact that a portion of the coal received consisted of coal inferior to that contracted for, does not give the vendee the right to rescind. His remedy is set-off or suit for dam-

When duty is divisible, performance may be partial.

¹ Benj. on Sales, §§ 47, 690; Waddington v. Oliver, *ut supra*; Oxendale v. Wetherill, 9 B. & C. 386; Champion v. Short, 1 Camp. 53; Morgan v. Gath, 3 H. & C. 748; Booth v. Tyson, 15 Vt. 515; Bowker v. Hoyt, 18 Pick. 556; Marland v. Stanwood, 101 Mass. 470; Wright v. Barnes, 14 Conn. 518; Roberts v. Beatty, 2 P. & W. 63; Rookford, etc. R. R. v. Lent, 63 Ill. 288; Smith v. Lewis, 40 Ind. 98; and see observations of Wilde, J., in Snow v. Ware, 13 Met. 49.

² Gilman v. Hall, 11 Vt. 510; Woodward v. Fuller, 80 N. Y. 812; Chambers v. Jaynes, 4 Barr, 39. That substantial performance is sufficient, see *supra*, §§ 607, 869.

³ *Supra*, §§ 579, 712. See last sec-

tion, and to same effect, Glazebrook v. Woodrow, 8 T. R. 366; Bowker v. Hoyt, 18 Pick. 555; Foxall v. Fletcher, 59 How. Pr. 88; Shaw v. Badger, 12 S. & R. 275; Sinnott v. Mullin, 82 Penn. St. 333. As to effect of partial impossibility, see *supra*, § 330. That when after a partial delivery of goods final delivery is prevented the vendor may maintain *indebitatus assumpsit*, see *supra*, § 712. As to whether a contract is rescinded by refusal to accept instalments, see *supra*, § 580.

⁴ Mavor v. Pyne, 3 Bing. 235; *supra*, § 712.

⁵ Booth v. Tyson, 15 Vt. 515; and see generally Roberts v. Havelock, 3 B. & Ad. 409; and cases cited *supra*, § 712.

ages.¹—"The buyer is bound to pay for any part that he accepts; and after the time for delivery has elapsed, he must either return or pay for the part received, and cannot insist on retaining it without payment until the vendor makes delivery of the rest."²—In New York, however, it is held that where there is a contract to deliver a specified quantity of goods, on a particular day, at a lumping price, to be paid on delivery and acceptance of the whole, the vendor cannot recover in goods sold and delivered for a part delivered and accepted by the purchaser.³—So far as concerns sales of real estate, when there has been a partial failure of consideration, and the contract is in this respect divisible, there can be a recovery for the portion of the contract as to which the consideration holds good.⁴

¹ *Scott v. Coal Co.*, 89 Penn. St. 231; see *supra*, § 580; and see, to same effect, *Tenny v. Mulvaney*, 8 Oregon, 129. That a contract to peel a certain quantity of hemlock timber by a specified date, and to start the timber on good roads, D. to have the bark when started as his remuneration, is not divisible, see *Hartley v. Decker*, 89 Penn. St. 470. That delivery of successive instalments may be conditioned on delivery of first, see *supra*, § 580. No precise rule can be given by which the question whether a contract is entire or divisible can be determined. Like most other questions of construction, it depends upon the intention of the parties to be gathered from what appears upon the face of the contract and surrounding circumstances. *Gray v. Hinton*, 2 McCrary, 167.

² *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 690, citing in addition to cases cited above, *Star Glass Co. v. Morey*, 108 Mass. 570; *Shields v. Pettee*, 2 Sandf. 202; *McKnight v. Devlin*, 52 N. Y. 399; *Richards v. Shaw*, 67 Ill. 222; *Wilson v. Wagar*, 26 Mich. 452.

³ *Mead v. Degolyer*, 16 Wend. 632; *Champlin v. Rowley*, 18 Wend. 187;

Paige v. Ott, 5 Denio, 406; *Baker v. Higgins*, 21 N. Y. 397; *McKnight v. Devlin*, 52 N. Y. 399; *Kein v. Tupper*, 52 N. Y. 550; and see *Witherow v. Witherow*, 16 Ohio, 238; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 47; 2 Pars. on Cont. 659. In a case in New York in 1880, C. contracted for \$1500 to put up on O.'s premises a gas machine; but O., after receiving the castings and materials, refused to permit C. to put up the gas machine. It was held that O. was liable for damages for breach of contract, but not for the contract price. *Butler v. Butler*, 77 N. Y. 472.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 191, 898; *Morris v. Phelps*, 5 Johns. 49; *Melick v. Dayton*, 34 N. J. Eq. 245; *Johnson v. Churchill*, 49 Iowa, 257; see *supra*, §§ 520, 746.

In *Messer v. Oestreich*, 52 Wis. 684, we have the following from Cassaday, J.: "When the title fails to only a part of the land conveyed, the grantee may recover in an action on the covenants of seizin and right to convey (or upon an agreement to convey) such a proportion of the whole consideration paid as the value of the part to which the title fails bore to the whole purchase-price at the time of the purchase,

§ 900. It is otherwise when an aggregate quantity of labor

with interest thereon during the time he has been deprived of the use of such part, not exceeding six years. In *Flureau v. Thornhill*, 2 W. Black 1078, Blackstone, J., said: 'These contracts are merely upon condition, frequently expressed but always implied, that the vendor has a good title. If he has not, the return of the deposit, with interest and costs, is all that can be expected.' In *Statte v. Ten Eyck*, 5 Caines, 111, it was held that 'under a covenant of ownership, seizin, power to sell, and for peaceable enjoyment, if the vendee be evicted he can recover only the value of the land at the time of the purchase, with interest for so long a time as he pays mesne profits, and the costs of ejectment, that he brought against him, but not those of the action for mesne profits.' In that case the consideration paid was taken as the value of the land, and Kent, C. J., in his opinion, says that 'the interest ought to be calculated on the consideration sum.' Page 115. That case was followed and approved in *Pitcher v. Livingston*, 4 Johns. 1; *Caulkins v. Harris*, 9 id. 324; *Bennett v. Jenkins*, 13 id. 50. See, also, *Cox v. Henry*, 32 Penn. St. 18; *Willson v. Willson*, 25 N. H. 229. In *Pitcher v. Livingston* the value was restricted to the amount of the consideration paid. In *Caulkins v. Harris* the grantee held possession for fifteen years before he was evicted, but he was only allowed interest on the consideration paid for six years, because that was the limit of time for which he was answerable for mesne profits, and the same rule was adopted in *Bennett v. Jenkins* and *Cox v. Henry*. The rule that the recovery shall not exceed the amount of the consideration paid and interest has been extended to covenants against liens and

encumbrances in several of the states. *Grant v. Tallman*, 20 N. Y. 191; *Dimmick v. Lockwood*, 10 Wend. 142; *Cox v. Henry*, 32 Penn. St. 18; *Willson v. Willson*, 25 N. H. 229; *Foot v. Burnett*, 10 Ohio, 317. The rule thus stated and the cases cited in support of it are in harmony with the decisions of this court. *Rich v. Johnson*, 2 Pinney, 88; *Blossom v. Knox*, 3 id. 262; *Pillsbury v. Mitchell*, 5 Wis. 17; *Noonan v. Ilsley*, 21 id. 140; *Nichol v. Alexander*, 28 id. 118. But where, as in this case, there is a failure of title to only a fractional portion of the land purchased, is the same rule of damages applicable? In *Morris v. Phelps*, 5 Johns. 49, the title to one-sixth of the two tracts described in one deed failed, and the title to five-sixths of the tract described in another deed failed, and Kent, C. J., giving the opinion of the court, makes this statement, and cites from the Year Books and Coke in support of it: 'The plaintiff was entitled to recover damages only in proportion to the extent of the defect of title. This is an old and well-settled rule of damages, that if one be bound to warrant, he warrants the entirety; but he shall not render in value but for that which was lost.' He concluded thus: 'There is then no law or reason why the plaintiff should recover more than one-sixth of the consideration-money and interest for the two tracts mentioned in the first count, and five-sixths of the consideration-money and interest for the tract contained in the second count?' To the same effect are *Guthrie v. Pugsley*, 12 Johns. 126; *Wager v. Schuyler*, 1 Wend. 553; *Dimmick v. Lockwood*, 10 Wend. 142; *Cornell v. Jackson*, 3 Cush. 506; *Partidge v. Hatch*, 18 N. H. 494; *Ela v. Card*, 2 id. 175."

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or of material is contracted for in such terms as to show that what the promisee contracts for is the thing as a whole. In such case if the promisor voluntarily desist from completing his engagement, after having partially complied with it, he cannot recover for the fractional services rendered, or the fractional material delivered.¹ An agreement, for instance, by A. to find for a fixed fee a purchaser for a farm, only entitles A. to a fee in case he finds a purchaser for the farm as entire.² Where, also, the part of a property sold as to which there is a failure of title, is essential to the residue, the contract is indivisible;³ and so where a horse and mare, forming a pair, are sold, though by different bids, at a public sale.⁴ But where a contract for labor is suspended by sickness or death, the employee (or his representatives) may recover for the services actually rendered, deducting any damages the employer may have received from non-fulfilment of contract.⁵ The same rule obtains in respect to work on an article subsequently destroyed by *casus*.⁶

¹ See Benj. on Sales, § 689; Lovatt v. Hamilton, 5 M. & W. 639; Reuter v. Sala, L. R. 4 C. P. D. 239; Philbrook v. Belknap, 6 Vt. 383; Ripley v. Chipman, 13 Vt. 268; Olmstead v. Beale, 19 Pick. 528; Croninger v. Crocker, 62 N. Y. 151; Highland Chem. Co. v. Matthews, 75 N. Y. 145; Martin v. Schoenberger, 8 W. & S. 367; Hartley v. Decker, 89 Penn. St. 470; see *supra*, § 552.

² Weber v. Clark, 24 Minn. 354.

³ Graver v. Scott, 80 Penn. St. 88; see Quigley v. De Haas, 82 Penn. St. 267; see *supra*, § 552.

⁴ Kerr v. Shrader, 1 Weekly Notes, 33.

⁵ See *supra*, §§ 303 *et seq.*; §§ 580, 716, and particularly cases cited *supra*, § 716.

⁶ *Supra*, § 316. In Reuter v. Sala, L. R. 4 C. P. D. 289, the plaintiff agreed to sell the defendants "about

25 tons (more or less) Penang black pepper, October and November ship-
or

ment from Penang to London, the name of vessel and particulars to be declared within 60 days from date of bill of lading. The plaintiffs declared within the stipulated time 25 tons, by a vessel called the Borga, but only 20 tons complied with the terms of the contract as to shipment, and no further declarations were made. It was held by Cotton and Thesiger, L. JJ., that the contract was entire, and that the defendants could not be compelled to accept the 20 tons." Brett, J., diss.— "I cannot consider," said Cotton, L. J., "the case of Brandt v. Lawrence, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 344, as laying down a general rule of construction, but merely as deciding that the contract in that case having regard to the words 'vessel or vessels' was divisible."

§ 901. When the full performance of the contract is prevented by the interference of the party to whom the work or the goods are to be delivered, he cannot, when the contract is entire, set up imperfect performance as a defence to a suit for the price.¹ The interruption is his own doing, and he must pay on a *quantum meruit* for what he has received;² or be liable in damages for breach of contract.³—A party to be benefited by the performance of a condition precedent, also, may waive such performance.⁴

Party preventing completion cannot charge the other with consequences of failure.

§ 902. When in a contract the qualifications “about,” or “more or less,” are used, neither party is understood as binding himself to an exact amount. A reasonable variation in bulk, under such a contract, is allowed; and what is reasonable depends upon the circumstances of the particular case.⁵ Thus, in an English case in 1881, *A.*, a commission agent, advised the plaintiffs that the defendants had a quantity of old iron in their yard for sale (“about 150 tons”). The plaintiffs then wrote to the defendants as follows: “We are buyers of good wrought scrap iron, free of light and burnt iron, for our American house, and understand from Mr. A. that you have for sale about 150 tons. We can offer you 80s. per ton.” After several intermediate letters relating to the place of delivery and expense of carting, the defendants wrote, “We accept your offers of the 14th and 19th inst. for old iron, viz.: 80s. per ton. We delivering alongside vessel in one of the London docks. Please let us know when you can send a man here to see it weighed, and also inform us where to send it.” Pre-

“About,” “more or less,” are proximate estimates.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 312, 603–4, 712, 716–7; *Leake*, 2d ed. 824; *Cross v. Eglin*, 2 B. & Ad. 106; *Bourne v. Seymour*, 16 C.

² *Story on Cont.* § 1330; *supra*, § 712; *B. 337*; *Moore v. Campbell*, 10 Ex. 323; *Champlin v. Rowley*, 18 Wend. 187; *Cockerell v. Aucompte*, 2 C. B. N. S. 440; *Morris v. Levison*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 155; *Brawley v. U. S.*, 96 U. S. 168; *Updike v. Ten Broeck*, 3 Vroom, 105; *Pembroke Iron Co. v. Parsons*, 5 Gray, 589; *Melick v. Dayton*, 34 N. J. Eq. 245; *Creighton v. Comstock*, 27 Oh. St. 548.

³ *Butler v. Butler*, 77 N. Y. 472, cited *supra*, 900.

⁴ *Supra*, § 604.

⁵ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 691;

viously to A.'s communication to the plaintiff, he had seen a heap of iron in the yard of defendants, who were builders, and said, "You seem to have about 150 tons there." The reply was "Yes, or more." The defendants only delivered forty-four tons, that being the quantity of the heap in the yard, and the plaintiffs recovered 50% damages in an action for short delivery. It was held by Grove and Lindley, JJ., that the words "about 150 tons," being merely words of estimate and expectation, and there being no warranty as to quantity, the defendants were not bound to deliver 150 tons. It was further ruled that the subject-matter of the contract was not 150 tons of iron, but the iron which A. had seen in the defendants' yard.¹—"More or less" is to be interpreted according to the intention. It may mean that the figure given will be only slightly varied from.² It may imply simply a conjectural estimate.³ The question is one of intent.⁴—"Say about" has been held to indicate only a conjectural estimate, and not a specific statement of quantity.⁵ "Not less than" indicates a minimum below which the delivery is not to go.⁶—In deeds of real estate, when a farm is described by boundaries, and is stated to contain a specified number of acres, "be the same more or less," a slight discrepancy not indicating fraud or mutual mistake will not avoid the deed or sustain an action for damages.⁷—"Where the sale is for a gross sum, and there are qualifying words used, such as 'more or less,' or equivalent

¹ *McLay v. Perry*, 44 L. T. Rep. (N. S.) 152.

² *Harrington v. Mayor*, 70 N. Y. 604.

³ *Callmeyer v. Mayor*, 83 N. Y. 116.

⁴ In *Shickle v. Chouteau*, 10 Mo. Ap. 241, the court held (citing *Cross v. Eglin*, 2 B. & Ad. 106, 110; *Cabot v. Winsor*, 1 Allen, 546, 550; and *Patterson v. Judd*, 27 Mo. 563, 567) that the words "more or less" in a contract will not cover an indefinite quantity, and will allow only a slight departure from the quantity expressed in the contract; and further (citing *Morris v. Levison*, 1 C. P. D. 155; *Leeming v. Snaith*, 16 Q. B. 275), that these

words added to a given quantity expressed in a contract do not create such ambiguity in its terms as to render parol explanation admissible.

⁵ *Gwillim v. Daniel*, 2 C. M. & R. 61; *McConnel v. Murphy*, L. R. 5 P. C. 203. See *Robinson v. Noble*, 8 Pet. 181; *Pembroke Iron Co. v. Parsons*, 5 Gray, 589.

⁶ *Leeming v. Snaith*, 16 Q. B. 275.

⁷ *Galbraith v. Galbraith*, 6 Watts, 112; *Hershey v. Keembortz*, 6 Barr, 128; *Coughenour v. Stauff*, 77 Penn. St. 191; *Kreiter v. Bomberger*, 82 Penn. St. 59.

expressions, they have been held to import that quantity does not enter into the essence of the contract."¹ But the force of the words "about sixty-five acres," is "simply that while the parties do not bind themselves to the precise quantity of sixty-five acres, it imports that the actual quantity is a near approximation to that mentioned, that is to say, within a fraction of an acre, or perhaps it might cover a discrepancy of one or two acres."²—The deficiency, in such cases, in order to justify a rescission, must be so great as to indicate either fraud or radical mutual mistake.³ The terms "about" and "more or less" are not to be so strained as to cover more than those slight aberrations incidental to measurements of the particular class in question.⁴

§ 903. When a contract is for delivery of goods, the goods delivered must correspond in quality with the terms of the contract.⁵ As has been already seen, when goods are warranted to be of a particular quality, the warranty, whether express or implied, can be enforced in a suit for damages;⁶ and when the contract was induced by misrepresentation or fraud, it can be rescinded by the party imposed upon.⁷ Rescission, also, as we have seen, may be granted on failure in part performance.⁸ The question of implied warranty, as has also been seen, depends upon the

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description
may be
returned.

¹ Bartol, C. J., Baltimore Build. Co. v. Smith, 54 Md. 203; citing Stebbins v. Eddy, 4 Mason, 419; Jones v. Plater, 2 Gill, 128; Stull v. Hurtt, 9 Gill, 446; Hall v. Mayhew, 15 Md. 551; Slothower v. Gordon, 23 Md. 9; Tyson v. Hardisty, 29 Md. 305.

² Bartol, C. J., *ut supra*. A vendor, in a Vermont case in 1880, on a sale of certain lots of ground, told the vendee in good faith that the lots contained 100 acres each; and in the deed it was recited that "said lots supposed to contain one hundred acres each, more or less." In two of the lots it was found, on survey, that there was a material deficiency. It was held that the vendee was entitled to deduct, in paying the purchase-money, the value

of the deficiency. *Darling v. Osborne*, 51 Vt. 148; see *Heath v. Pratt*, 51 Vt. 238.

³ *Noble v. Googins*, 99 Mass. 231; *Belknap v. Sealey*, 2 Duer, 579; *Ketchum v. Stout*, 20 Ohio, 455. See *supra*, §§ 293, 898; *infra*, § 919.

⁴ *Ibid*. See *Quesnel v. Woodlief*, 2 Hen. & M. 173.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 221-2; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 657, 661; *Crane v. Roberts*, 5 Greenl. 419; *Goss v. Turner*, 21 Vt. 437; *Gaylord Man. Co. v. Allen*, 53 N. Y. 518; *Hyatt v. Boyle*, 5 Gill & J. 110; *Merriam v. Field*, 24 Wis. 640.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 221 *et seq.*

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 213, 282.

⁸ *Supra*, § 293; *infra*, § 919.

facts in each particular case.¹ Error as to quality, also, does not sustain rescission of a contract, though misrepresentation in this respect will found an action for damages.² But when a contract calls for an article to effect a particular physical purpose, and the article is from its generic character not fitted for such purpose, then there is no concurrence of minds as to the particular thing, and the article, being unfitted for the purpose, can be returned. When the question is one susceptible of exact determination, and when it can be said that a thing is either absolutely fit or absolutely unfit, then if a party buys a thing that is absolutely unfit under the impression, fostered by the other side, that it is fit, there is no concurrence of minds as to one and the same thing. In such cases the bargain may be repudiated, and the article returned.³ A contract never was made, and there is nothing existing between the parties binding the receiver to keep the article.⁴ It is otherwise as to mere failure in quality.⁵

§ 904. The receiver is not necessarily bound to return goods which do not answer the vendor's description. In cases where there is not absolute incongruity between the thing described and the thing delivered, he may say, "I keep the goods, and sue you for the damage arising from the misdescription." And this rule applies when there is an assertion that an article is fitted physically for a particular purpose, and it is bought for this purpose. This amounts to a warranty;⁶ though it is otherwise when the

Or vendor
may be
sued on
warranty.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 219 *et seq.*

² *Supra*, § 189.

³ *Supra*, §§ 4, 177, 214, 221.

⁴ *Supra*, § 178; and see *supra*, §§ 559 *et seq.*; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 600; Chanter v. Hopkins, 4 M. & W. 399; Henshaw v. Robins, 9 Met. 83; Mansfield v. Trigg, 113 Mass. 350; Hawkins v. Pemberton, 51 N. Y. 198; Dounce v. Dow, 57 N. Y. 21. An agreement that wheat to be delivered shall be "good milling wheat," is a warranty of quality; Jack v. R. R., 53 Iowa, 399; *supra*, § 219.

⁵ *Supra*, § 189.

⁶ *Supra*, § 263; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 656; Leake, 2d ed. 404; Brown v. Edginton, 2 M. & G. 279; Randall v. Newson, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 102; Laing v. Fidgeon, 6 Taunt. 108; Shepherd v. Pybus, 3 M. & G. 868; Dennett v. Short, 7 Greenl. 150; Mansfield v. Trigg, 113 Mass. 350; White v. Miller, 71 N. Y. 118; Gallagher v. Waring, 9 Wend. 20; Boyd v. Wilson, 83 Penn. St. 319; Wolcott v. Mount, 36 N. J. L. 262; 38 N. J. L. 496; Lord v. Grow, 39 Penn. St. 88; McClung v. Kelly, 21 Iowa, 508; Chicago Packing Co. v. Tilton, 87 Ill. 547.

article is sold to effect an end not susceptible of physical measurement, and in itself conjectural—*e. g.* a specific sold as a means of recovering health. And when an article is sold, not to effect a particular physical purpose, which the vendor warrants it can effect, but merely as having certain characteristics—*e. g.* as being the “patent smoke consuming furnace” of a certain inventor—there is no warranty implied that it will exhibit these characteristics in successful action.¹ And where the purchaser gets what he orders, but neglects to take a warranty as to fitness for use, he is supposed to act with his eyes open, and cannot fall back on an implied warranty;² and so when he buys on his own inspection.³

§ 905. An implied warranty is held to exist that an article made or supplied to the order of the purchaser is reasonably fit for the purpose for which it is ordinarily used, or that it is fit for the special purpose intended by the purchaser, if that purpose be communicated to the vendor when the order is given.⁴

Article supplied to order is warranted to answer order.

In 1868, in a case already cited,⁵ it was ruled that where an article is sold for a particular purpose, so that the buyer necessarily trusts to the judgment or skill of the vendor, there “is an implied term of warranty that it shall be reasonably

¹ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed., §§ 656–7; *Chanter v. Hopkins*, 4 M. & W. 399; *Ollivant v. Bayley*, 5 Q. B. 288; *Deming v. Foster*, 42 N. H. 165; *Pease v. Sabin*, 38 Vt. 432; *Tilton Safe Co. v. Tisdale*, 48 Vt. 83; *Pacific Iron Works v. Newhall*, 34 Conn. 67; *Port Carbon Co. v. Groves*, 68 Penn. St. 149; *Rodgers v. Niles*, 11 Oh. St. 48; *Gerst v. Jones*, 32 Grat. 518; see *supra*, § 263. The rule as stated by Mr. Benjamin, *Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 656, is that “in a sale of goods by description, where the buyer has not inspected the goods, there is, in addition to the *condition precedent* that the goods shall answer the description, an *implied warranty* that they shall be salable and merchantable.” To this is cited *Gardiner*

v. Gray, 4 Camp. 144; *Jones v. Bright*, 5 Bing. 533.

² *Dounce v. Dow*, 64 N. Y. 411.

³ *Supra*, § 227; *infra*, § 907; *Burney v. Bollett*, 16 M. & W. 644; *Emmerton v. Matthews*, 7 H. & N. 586; *Ward v. Hobbs*, 2 Q. B. D. 338; *Deming v. Foster*, 42 N. H. 165; and see *supra*, §§ 196, 245, 289, 572, 753.

⁴ *Supra*, § 221; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 645, citing in note by American editor, *Rodgers v. Niles*, 11 Oh. St. 48; *Byers v. Chapin*, 28 Oh. St. 300; see, also, *Beels v. Olmstead*, 24 Vt. 114; *Hastings v. Lovering*, 2 Pick. 214; *Moses v. Mead*, 1 Denio, 378; *White v. Miller*, 71 N. Y. 118; *Brenton v. Davis*, 8 Blackf. 317; *Babcock v. Trice*, 18 Ill. 420.

⁵ *Jones v. Just*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 197.

fit for the purpose to which it is to be applied.”¹ It was further held that “where a manufacturer undertakes to supply goods manufactured by himself, or in which he deals, but which the vendee has not had the opportunity of inspecting, it is an implied term in the contract that he shall supply a merchantable article.”² The merchant who undertakes to fill an order for an article of a particular kind, to answer a particular purpose, stands in this respect on the same footing as the manufacturer. If the article does not correspond to the order, the merchant ought not to deliver it.³

¹ To this is cited *Brown v. Edgington*, 2 M. & G. 279; *Jones v. Bright*, 5 Bing. 533; and to the same effect see cases in prior section, and *Randall v. Newson*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 102, cited *supra*, § 223.

² To this is cited *Laing v. Fidgeon*, 4 Camp. 169; 6 Taunt. 108. Judge Bennett, in a note, refers in addition to *Brown v. Sayles*, 27 Vt. 227; *Pease v. Sabin*, 38 Vt. 432; *Harris v. Waite*, 51 Vt. 480; *Gaylord Man. Co. v. Allen*, 53 N. Y. 515; *Gallagher v. Waring*, 9 Wend. 20; *Rodgers v. Niles*, 11 Oh. St. 48; *Howie v. Rea*, 70 N. C. 559; *Mann v. Everston*, 32 Ind. 355; see, also, cases cited *supra*, § 223. For qualifications see *Hight v. Bacon*, 126 Mass. 10. To same effect see *Howard v. Hoey*, 23 Wend. 350; *Moses v. Mead*, 1 Denio, 378.

³ *Pacific Iron Works v. Newhall*, 34 Conn. 67. Whether a donor (*Geschenkegeber*) is liable for warranty (*Gewährleistung*) is a moot question in the Roman law, the agitation of which dates as far back as Azo. (*Glossa ad L. 1, C. de jure dot. et ad L. 18, § 3, D. de donat.*) Azo maintains that there is a warranty only in cases where expressly promised. This opinion, according to Koch (§ 121), was dominant until the time of Duaren (1557), who maintained that warranty may be implied in all cases of donation. This doctrine was sustained by the most eminent

jurists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That when a gift is a pure act of bounty, and in no sense based on reciprocity, there can be no warranty implied, has been maintained by high authorities, among whom Koch enumerates Struve, Lauterbach, Stryk, Westenberg, and Wachtler.

In *Johnson v. Raylton*, 45 L. T. N. S. 374, L. R. 7 Q. B. D. 438, cited *supra*, § 221, it was held that where goods are from a manufacturer it is an implied element in the contract that the goods supplied shall be of his own manufacture. It was further held that the implication may be rebutted by evidence of a contrary practice in a particular trade. On this case the *London Law Times* comments as follows: “In spite of this great difference in the result, not only both courts, but also all the judges in both courts, agree up to a certain point. They agree that if a contract is made with a manufacturer of goods, to whose name or skill a peculiar value attaches, to supply those goods, he is bound to supply them of his own manufacture, even though there be no express agreement to that effect in the contract. For instance, if a man order a picture from the president of the Royal Academy, champagne from Moët and Chandon, or a piano from Broadwood, he is entitled to be supplied with an article of the manu-

§ 906. This is *à fortiori* the case where the purchaser relies on the skill or judgment of the vendor as an assurance that the thing sold will answer the desired purpose; it being understood that confidence is given and received.¹—As has been already seen, selling by a merchant implies merchantability.²

And so when vendor is specially trusted.

§ 907. It is otherwise when the purchaser buys on his own judgment. In such cases the maxim *caveat emptor* applies. The purchaser, such is the understanding of both parties, relies on his own inspection, and not upon any assurances of the vendor.³ Thus where a purchaser inspects personally a specific article sold, and the seller, who is not the manufacturer, makes no warranty, and is guilty of no fraud, and the intended use of the article is not communicated at the time to the vendor, there is no implied

Otherwise when purchaser buys on his own judgment.

facture of that man, or those firms; and that the proposition is equally true whether the article is already in existence, or has to be made. Where, however, the conflict of judicial opinion commences, is with regard to articles to which no such peculiar value can be said to attach, articles of which one maker's make is as good as another's, and which have no special reputé or name, or other distinction. With regard to these the majority of the Scottish judges and Lord Justice Bramwell are of opinion that there is no agreement by the seller, though a manufacturer, that the goods shall be of his own make; whereas, the majority of the court of appeal and Lord Young (of the Scotch court) are of a contrary opinion." In the Alb. L. J. of Nov. 26, 1881, the following, in the same connection, is cited from the opinion of the court, in *Chicago Packing and Provision Co. v. Tilton*, 87 Ill. 555, a pork case: "It is plain, however, that a party dealing with a corporation, engaged in business as a manufacturer, and in selling its manufactured goods, and whose name gives no suggestion

to the contrary, has a right to assume, when it offers such goods for sale with nothing to suggest the contrary, that it proposes to sell as a manufacturer, and not as an ordinary dealer in the market, and unless the proof shows satisfactorily that plain notice of its acting in a different character was brought home to the party dealing with such corporation, it cannot insist upon being treated as other than a manufacturer."

¹ *Supra*, §§ 221 *et seq.*; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 661, citing *Randall v. Newson*, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 102; *Bigge v. Parkinson*, 7 H. & N. 955; *Macfarlane v. Taylor*, L. R. 1 Sc. Ap. 245; *Beals v. Olmstead*, 24 Vt. 114; *Brown v. Sayles*, 27 Vt. 227; *Cunningham v. Hall*, 4 Allen, 273; *Dutton v. Gerrish*, 9 Cush. 89; *Rice v. Forsythe*, 41 Md. 389; *Gammell v. Gumby*, 52 Ga. 504. That a fiduciary relation makes a full disclosure incumbent, see *supra*, § 254.

² *Supra*, § 223.

³ *Supra*, §§ 227, 245; *Chanter v. Hopkins*, 4 M. & W. 399; *Azemar v. Casella*, L. R. 2 C. P. 677; and cases cited *supra*, § 227.

warranty by the vendor that the article is fitted for the use to which the purchaser intended to apply it, although the vendor might have supposed what was the intended use.¹

§ 908. Aside from his liability on warranty, express or implied, a vendor may become liable in an action for injuries to parties to whom he negligently exposes articles of a character likely to produce the injuries inflicted.²

Vendor may be liable for negligence.

§ 909. On the principle *expressio unius est exclusio alterius* an express warranty, when introduced into a contract of sale, is exclusive, and leaves no room for the assumption of an implied warranty.³

Express warranty excludes implied.

§ 910. Proof is admissible of a usage in a particular trade that a particular mode of selling implies a warranty.⁴ But usage cannot be put in evidence to contradict the obvious meaning of the document, unless the allegation be mutual mistake, and the application be to rectify;⁵ nor to introduce a stipulation conflicting with the obligation the law imposes on the parties.⁶

Warranty may be implied from usage.

§ 911. An implied warranty that goods are merchantable does not make the vendor liable for any loss they may have sustained through depreciation in their carriage.⁷ It is otherwise, however, when the depreciation occurs before the arrival of the goods at a place where the vendor agreed they should be measured and transferred finally to the purchaser.⁸

Warranty does not cover depreciation in transit.

§ 912. A butcher in selling meat for human food warrants it to be fit for food,⁹ though it is otherwise with regard to animals exposed generally for sale in a

Provisions sold for

¹ Hight v. Bacon, 126 Mass. 10.

² *Supra*, § 228; and see *infra*, § 1043 et seq.

³ See *supra*, §§ 220, 674.

⁴ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 655; Jones v. Bowden, 4 Taunt. 847; Syers v. Jones, 2 Ex. 111; Allen v. Prink, 4 M. & W. 140; Randall v. Kehler, 60 Me. 37; Eldredge v. Smith, 13 Allen, 140; see *supra*, § 661.

⁵ Wh. on Ev. § 970; Brown v. Thurston, 56 Me. 127; Austen v. Sawyer, 9

Cow. 40; Evans v. Waln, 71 Penn. St. 69; Cent. R. R. v. Anderson, 58 Ga. 393; see *supra*, § 661.

⁶ Dickinson v. Gay, 7 Allen, 34; Boardman v. Spooner, 13 Allen, 353; Snelling v. Hall, 107 Mass. 138.

⁷ Bull v. Robison, 10 Ex. 342.

⁸ Cushman v. Holyoke, 34 Me. 289. As to defective package, see Gower v. Van Dedalzen, 3 Bing. N. C. 717.

⁹ *Infra*, § 222.

public market, as to which the only implied warranty is that as far as the seller knows they are not unmarketable.¹ Nor does this implied warranty extend to provisions sold for merchandise which “are packed, inspected, and prepared for exportation.”²

§ 913. If the law requires that an article before sale should be stamped in a particular way, then the article must be so stamped in order to comply with the conditions of sale;³ and if the packing is to be in a particular way, then this must be attended to by the vendor.⁴ The goods, also, must be susceptible of sale by the local law.⁵

domestic
use must
be fit.

Conditions
imposed by
local law
must be
complied
with.

§ 914. When there is a sale by sample, goods delivered must correspond with the sample, and if they do not, they may be returned by the purchaser.⁶ But beyond this the implied warranty on a sale by sample does not go. If the goods correspond with the sample, it is not necessary that they should have specific merchantable qualities.⁷ A warranty by sample, however, may be so framed as to include quantity as well as quality.⁸—As is elsewhere shown, on a sale by sample the purchaser should have the means of inspection and examination.⁹

On sale by
sample arti-
cle must
conform to
sample.

¹ *Supra*, § 222; *Emmerton v. Matthews*, 7 H. & N. 586; *Smith v. Baker*, 40 L. T. 261; *Burnby v. Bollett*, 16 M. & W. 644. As to fraud in warranty, see *supra*, § 263.

² Story on Cont. § 1078, citing *Winsor v. Lombard*, 18 Pick. 57; *Moses v. Mead*, 1 Denio, 378; *supra*, § 222.

³ *Elkins v. Parkhurst*, 17 Vt. 105.

⁴ *Clark v. Pinney*, 7 Cow. 681; 2 Pars. on Cont. 656.

⁵ Wh. Con. of L. §§ 334 *et seq.* See *supra*, § 299.

⁶ *Supra*, § 225; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 648; Leake, 2d ed. 408; *Hibbert v. Shee*, 1 Camp. 113; *Wells v. Hopkins*, 5 M. & W. 7; *Lorymer v. Smith*, 1 B. & C. 1; *Nichol v. Godts*, 10 Ex. 191; *Bradford v. Manly*, 13

Mass. 139; *Lothrop v. Otis*, 7 Allen, 435; *Oneida Man. Co. v. Lawrence*, 4 Cow. 440; *Boorman v. Jenkins*, 12 Wend. 566; *Moses v. Mead*, 1 Denio, 378; *Borrekins v. Bevan*, 3 Rawle, 23; *Maute v. Gross*, 56 Penn. St. 250; *Boyd v. Wilson*, 83 Penn. St. 314; *Magee v. Billingsby*, 3 Ala. 679.

⁷ *Ibid*; *Parkinson v. Lee*, 2 East, 314; *Mody v. Greyson*, L. R. 4 Ex. 49; *Dickson v. Zizinia*, 10 C. B. 602; *Beirne v. Dord*, 1 Selden, 95; *Cousinery v. Pearsall*, 40 N. Y. S. C. 113; *Boyd v. Wilson*, 83 Penn. St. 319; see other cases, *supra*, § 225.

⁸ *Azemar v. Casella*, L. R. 2 C. P. 677.

⁹ *Supra*, § 585; *infra*, § 915.

§ 915. The mere exhibition of a sample does not make a sale by sample. The purchaser may waive the test by sample and require an express warranty,¹ or fall back on his own personal inspection;² or the sample may be expressly stated by the vendor not to be given as a standard, and the purchaser may be notified to purchase at his own risk;³ or the purchaser may not examine the sample, but rely on his own inspection.⁴ In no one of these cases is the sale by sample.

Showing sample is not necessarily selling by sample.

§ 916. When goods are sold by sample, or when they are sold as answering a particular description, the delivery must be such as to enable the purchaser to see whether the goods correspond with the description or the sample, as the case may be.⁵ Hence the purchaser is not bound to accept goods in a closed cask which the vendor declines to open;⁶ nor where the vendor refuses to permit him to select the goods bought out of a larger quantity which the vendor has sent him;⁷ nor where the vendor refuses to permit a comparison of the bulk with the sample;⁸ nor where the inspection is made ineffectual by the vendor's default.⁹ Not only when he is refused inspection, but when on inspection he finds the goods do not correspond with the sample, is the purchaser entitled to reject them.¹⁰ If the vendor refuses to resume the goods, they may

On sale by sample or description purchaser must have opportunity of inspection.

¹ *Tye v. Fynmore*, 3 Camp. 462.

² *Barnard v. Kellogg*, 10 Wall. 383.

³ *Powell v. Horton*, 2 Bing. N. C. 668; *Gardiner v. Gray*, 4 Camp. 144; *Kellogg v. Barnard*, 6 Blatch. 279; 10 Wall. 383; *Graff v. Foster*, 67 Mo. 512; see *Russell v. Nicolopulo*, 8 C. B. N. S. 362; *Heilbutt v. Hickson*, L. R. 7 C. P. 438; *Oneida Man. Co. v. Lawrence*, 4 Cow. 440; *Beirne v. Dord*, 2 Sandf. 89; 1 Selden, 95; *Day v. Raquet*, 14 Minn. 273.

⁴ *Salisbury v. Stainer*, 19 Wend. 159.

⁵ *Supra*, § 565; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 594, 648, 695, 701, 896; *Leake*, 2d ed. 827; *Lorymer v. Smith*,

1 B. & C. 1; *Isherwood v. Whitmore*, 11 M. & W. 347.

⁶ *Isherwood v. Whitmore*, *ut supra*.

⁷ *Benj. on Sales*, 2d Am. ed. § 701; *Dixon v. Fletcher*, 3 M. & W. 146; *Hart v. Mills*, 15 M. & W. 85; *Nicholson v. Bradfield Union*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 620.

⁸ *Toulmin v. Headley*, 2 C. & K. 157; *Lorymer v. Smith*, 1 B. & C. 1.

⁹ *Heilbutt v. Hickson*, L. R. 7 C. P. 438.

¹⁰ *Heilbutt v. Hickson*, L. R. 7 C. P. 438; *Couston v. Chapman*, L. R. 2 Sc. Ap. 250; *Grimoldby v. Wells*, L. R. 10 C. P. 391; *Park v. Tool Co.*, 4 Lansing, 103.

be sold by the purchaser at the vendor's risk.¹ The burden of proving correspondence in such cases is on the vendor.²

§ 917. It is not necessary, if a large lot is sold, that each item should correspond with the sample. It is enough if there is an average correspondence.³ And, in any view, it is admissible to prove a custom that, upon a sale of berries in bags by sample, the sample represents the average quality of the entire lot sold.⁴

Average
corre-
spondence
with
sample is
enough.

§ 918. A vendor may, notwithstanding the correspondence with the sample, be held liable for breach of an express agreement of merchantability.⁵ A sample, also, is assumed to be free from secret defects.⁶ But the sample excludes implied warranty.⁷

Warranty
may be
added to
sample.

V. RESCISSION.

§ 919. We have already seen that rescission may be granted on the application of a party who has made a contract under a mistake;⁸ and so when the other party fails to perform in whole or in part.⁹ We have also seen that to obtain rescission, the party seeking relief must do equity;¹⁰ that he cannot have relief when the other party has suffered serious damage by his conduct;¹¹ that his election to ratify is final, and that he cannot ratify in part and rescind in part;¹² and that ratification may be by conduct.¹³ We have further seen that when there is a part performance, and prevention on the other side, the party partially performing may recover on a *quantum meruit* for what he has done.¹⁴ It should now be noticed in addition that a contract will not in general be rescinded on

On non-
perform-
ance of
condition
precedent
contract
may be
rescinded.

¹ *Messmore v. Shot Co.*, 40 N. Y. 438. But see *Dickinson v. Gay*, 7 422; *Gill v. Kauffman*, 16 Kan. 571. Allen, 34; and *supra*, § 225.

² *Merriman v. Chapman*, 32 Conn. 146.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 225, 914.

⁸ *Supra*, § 282.

⁹ *Leonard v. Fowler*, 44 N. Y. 289; see *supra*, § 225.

⁹ *Supra*, §§ 282, 293.

¹⁰ *Supra*, § 285.

⁴ *Schnitzer v. Print Works*, 114 Mass. 123.

¹¹ *Supra*, § 286.

¹² *Supra*, § 290.

⁵ *Mody v. Gregson*, L. R. 4 Ex. 49.

¹³ *Supra*, § 288.

⁶ *Heilbutt v. Hickson*, L. R. 7 C. P.

¹⁴ *Supra*, §§ 579, 712.

the application of one party on the ground of non-performance by the other party, unless the party claiming relief does equity by putting the other party as far as possible in the position he would have been in had the contract not been executed.¹ Thus, a sale of real estate, after conveyance, cannot be rescinded without reconveyance;² nor can the purchaser of a chattel rescind the sale without tendering it, if it have any value, to the vendor.³ But where the vendor, on an executory sale of chattels, has delivered, and the vendee has received, a part of the aggregate to be delivered, and the vendor then makes default as to the remainder, which remainder is susceptible of accurate liquidation, the vendee may rescind the contract, and recover back the corresponding portion of the purchase-money.⁴ Subject to these qualifications, whenever "one party to a contract refuses to execute any substantial part of the agreement, he thereby gives to the other party the option to rescind the entire contract."⁵ A party, also, who prevents the performance of a condition by the other party, or waives the performance, cannot complain of the non-performance.⁶ When one party, also, is prevented from performance by *casus*, the other may rescind.⁷ But the right to rescind must be exercised within reasonable time, though mere lapse of time does not estop, unless there be laches.⁸

¹ Hunt v. Silk, 5 East, 449; Clough v. R. R., L. R. 7. Ex. 26; Fitt v. Cassanet, 4 M. & G. 898; Lyon v. Bertram, 20 How. U. S. 149; Potter v. Titcomb, 22 Me. 300; Cook v. Gilman, 34 N. H. 556; Hammond v. Buckmaster, 22 Vt. 375; Conner v. Henderson, 15 Mass. 319; Thayer v. Turner, 8 Met. (Mass.) 550; Bartlett v. Drake, 100 Mass. 176; Burton v. Stewart, 3 Wend. 236; Johnson v. Titus, 2 Hill, 606; Pittsburg Turnpike Co. v. Com., 2 Watts, 433; Babcock v. Case, 61 Penn. St. 427; Morrow v. Rees, 69 Penn. St. 368; Benson v. Cowell, 52 Iowa, 137.

² Tisdale v. Buckmore, 33 Me. 461; Perley v. Balch, 23 Pick. 283; Pearsoll v. Chapin, 44 Penn. St. 9; and cases cited *supra*, §§ 285 *et seq.*

³ Tisdale v. Buckmore, 33 Me. 461; Getchell v. Chase, 37 N. H. 110; Perley v. Balch, 23 Pick. 282; Dorr v. Fisher, 1 Cush. 271.

⁴ Hill v. Reeve, 11 Met. 288; citing Johnson v. Johnson, 3 B. & P. 162; Miner v. Bradley, 22 Pick. 457; Hayden v. Reynolds, 54 Iowa, 157.

⁵ Bell, J., Webb v. Stone, 24 N. H. 288; and see to same effect, *supra*, §§ 263, 579, 712.

⁶ *Supra*, § 602 *et seq.*

⁷ *Supra*, § 323.

⁸ *Supra*, § 289; De Bussche v. Alt, L. R. 8 Ch. D. 314; Towers v. Barrett, 1 T. R. 136; Hodgson v. Davies, 2 Camp. 530; Veazie v. Williams, 3 Story, 612; Pence v. Langdon, 99 U. S. 581; Webb v. Stone, 24 N. H. 282;

Whether there has been undue delay is a question in part of law and in part of fact to be decided by the jury under the direction of the court.¹ But there can be no rescission on a mere qualified refusal on the other side to perform.²

Getchell *v.* Chase, 37 N. H. 110; Gates *v.* Bliss, 43 Vt. 299; Saratoga R. R. *v.* Row, 24 Wend. 74; Masson *v.* Bovet, 1 Denio, 69; Relf *v.* Eberly, 23 Iowa, 467.

¹ Kingsley *v.* Wallis, 14 Me. 57; Holbrook *v.* Burt, 22 Pick. 546.

² Davison *v.* Jersey Co., 71 N. Y.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PAYMENT.

I. APPROPRIATION.

Appropriation of payment to be in accordance with debtor's intent, § 923.
 Intent to be inferred from circumstances, § 924.
 Insolvent distribution must be equal, § 925.
 Right is one which third parties cannot exercise, § 926.
 If debtor does not appropriate, creditor may do so, § 927.
 By Roman law, creditor is regarded as the debtor's agent in appropriation, § 928.
 In our law this agency is not recognized, § 929.
 Creditor may appropriate to debts not recoverable, § 930.
 Debts overdue preferred, § 931.
 Creditor's election continues until communicated, § 932.
 In accounts where there is no designation, first debt is to be paid, § 933.
 In other cases, the law divides equitably, § 934.

II. PARTIAL PAYMENT.

Receipt for less sum may extinguish debt if there be distinctive consideration, § 935.
 Plaintiff, by suing part of claim to judgment, may extinguish the whole, § 936.
 Fractional payment may extinguish larger unliquidated claim, § 937.

III. RECEIPTS.

Receipt open to explanation by parol, § 938.

Receipts may estop as to third parties, § 939.

One of several joint receivers may show that the money was received by his associates, § 940.

Releases must be under seal, or must have consideration, § 941.

IV. PAYMENT BY AND TO AGENTS, EXECUTORS, TRUSTEES, AND JOINT DEBTORS.

Payment by third party on behalf of debtor may discharge debt, § 942.

Payment to an agent is payment to principal, § 943.

So of payment to solicitor or attorney, § 944.

Factors and auctioneers may receive payment, but not brokers, § 945.

Payment to partner is payment to firm, § 946.

Executors may give receipts, § 947.

Trustees have only limited power to receipt, § 948.

Payment by one joint debtor discharges the other, § 949.

Payment to one joint creditor releases debt, § 950.

Joint deposit in bank can only be drawn out by joint order, § 951.

Purchase by stranger may be to take assignment of debt, § 952.

V. PAYMENT BY NEGOTIABLE PAPER.

Receipt of check *prima facie* proof of payment, § 953.

Negotiable security may be taken as mere collateral, § 954.

Question one of inference, § 955.

Acceptance of immature negotiable paper on account operates as conditional payment, § 956.

Negotiable paper may be accepted in satisfaction, § 957.

May bar suit when holder by negligence releases paper, § 958.

If passed to others, or lost or altered, this may bar suit, § 959.

Void security no payment, § 960.

VI. PAYMENT IN BANK NOTES.

Valid when a legal tender, § 961.

VII. PAYMENT BY LETTER.

Sufficient when in accordance with instructions, § 962.

VIII. PAYMENT IN GOODS, AND SET-OFF.

Payment in goods may, by agreement, be equivalent to payment in money, § 963.

Set-off, when agreed to, equivalent to payment, § 964.

Debts excluded by statute, and illegal debts, § 965.

IX. EFFECT OF PAYMENT.

Damages for detention of debt limited to interest, § 966.

After suit brought, payment must cover interest and costs, § 967.

I. APPROPRIATION.

§ 923. SUPPOSING several distinct debts are due from A. to B., and B. transmits to A. funds only sufficient to pay a part of those debts, the question arises as to which of them the money is to be applied. And the first rule to be observed is, that if the debtor designates the debt that is to be extinguished first, the money must be appropriated to pay that debt;¹ and if the creditor accept the money, it goes to the specific debt,² no matter what he may say at the time.³ And an appropriation once designated cannot be changed by the creditor without the debtor's assent.⁴

Appropriation of payment to be in accordance with debtor's intent.

¹ Story Eq. Jur. 12th ed. §§ 459b et seq.; Leake, 2d ed. 914; Chitty on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1110; Clayton's case, 1 Mer. 605; Simson v. Ingham, 2 B. & C. 72; Mills v. Fowkes, 5 Bing. N. C. 461; Cremer v. Higginson, 1 Mason, 338; U. S. v. Wardwell, 5 Mason, 85; Franklin Bk. v. Cooper, 36 Me. 222; Pierce v. Knight, 31 Vt. 701; Smuller v. Union Canal Co., 37 Penn. St. 68; Lee v. Early, 44 Md. 80; Pin-dall v. Bank, 10 Leigh, 481; Miller v. Trevellian, 2 Rob. Va. 2; Nutall v. Brannin, 5 Bush, 11; McDaniel v. Barnes, 5 Bush, 183.

² Croft v. Lumley, 5 E. & B. 680; Kitchen v. Hawkins, L. R. 2 C. P. 31; Kershaw v. Kirkpatrick, L. R. 3 Ap. Cas. 345; King v. Andrews, 30 Ind. 429; Champenois v. Fort, 45 Miss. 355.

³ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 746; Peters v. Anderson, 5 Taunt. 596; Waller v. Lacy, 1 M. & G. 54; Reed v. Boardman, 20 Pick. 441.

⁴ Levystein v. Whitman, 59 Ala. 345. The student will find an elaborate essay on the topic in the text in Ihering's Jahr. for 1874, vol. 14, under the title "Auf welche von mehreren Forderungen eine geleistete Zahlung

§ 924. If the debtor do not expressly designate the debt that is to be extinguished by the payment, his intent as to the appropriation of the payment may be inferred from all the circumstances of the case.¹ Thus it has been held that the proceeds of a mortgaged estate will be appropriated to the discharge of the mortgage debt, though there were earlier debts due from the same debtor to the same creditor, supposing no one of these debts is a specific lien on the fund.² When one of two debts is disputed, and the other is admitted, the payment will be presumed to have been intended by the debtor to have been appropriated to the undisputed debt.³—Intention may be proved by parol evidence of directions given by the debtor.⁴ But “the mere avowal of an intention to apply a fund or have it applied in a particular way, has never yet been held to be an application of it.”⁵—When a payment is of a sum precisely the same

abzurechnen ist, von Henrici, Vice-Präsident im Königlich Preuss. Obergericht.”

¹ Chitty on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1111; Leake, 2d ed. 915; Benj. on Sales, 8d Am. ed. § 747; Newmarch v. Clay, 14 East, 244; Robert v. Garnie, 3 Caines, 14; Foster v. McGraw, 64 Penn. St. 464; McKelvey v. Jarvis, 87 Penn. St. 414; Young v. English, 7 Beav. 10; Nash v. Hodgson, 6 D. M. & G. 474; Tayloe v. Sandiford, 7 Wheat. 14; Hunt v. Brewer, 68 Me. 262; Scott v. Ray, 18 Pick. 361; Mitchell v. Dall, 2 Har. & G. 159; 4 Gill & J. 361; Fowke v. Bowie, 4 Har. & J. 566; Pickett v. Bank, 32 Ark. 346; see Levystein v. Whitman, 59 Ala. 845; Jones v. Manney, 7 Lea (Tenn.) 341; Trullinger v. Kofoed, 7 Oreg. 228.

² Stoveld v. Eade, 4 Bing. 154; Sanders v. Knox, 57 Ala. 80; Pattison v. Hall, 9 Cow. 747; and cases *infra*, § 929. And see generally as sustaining the position of the text, Baker v. Stackpoole, 9 Cow. 420; Martin v. Draker, 5 Watts, 544; Bosley v. Porter, 4 J. J.

Marsh. 621; Libby v. Hopkins, Sup. Ct. U. S. 1882; 25 A. L. J. 153; U. S. v. Eckford, 17 Pet. 251; Blackstone Bank v. Hill, 10 Pick. 129; Rosseau v. Cull, 14 Vt. 83; Selleck v. Turnpike Co., 18 Conn. 453; Adams Ex. Co. v. Black, 62 Ind. 128. That the intent of the debtor may be inferred from extrinsic facts, see Waters v. Tompkins, 2 Cr. M. & R. 723; Starrett v. Barber, 20 Me. 457; Robinson v. Doolittle, 12 Vt. 246; Gwinn v. Whitaker, 1 Har. & J. 754; Dorsey v. Gassaway, 2 Har. & J. 402; Lindsey v. Stevens, 5 Dana, 104; see Ramsom v. Thomas, 10 Ired. 165.

³ Burn v. Boulton, 2 C. B. 476; West Branch Bank v. Moorhead, 5 W. & S. 542; Scott v. Fisher, 4 T. B. Monroe, 387; see Stone v. Seymours, 15 Wend. 19; and cases *infra*, § 934; but see, *contra*, Field v. Holland, 6 Cranch, 8.

⁴ Wittkowsky v. Reid, 182 N. C. 116. But see Brice v. Hamilton, 12 S. C. 32.

⁵ Gordon, J., Guthrie's Ap., 92 Penn. St. 272, citing Beans v. Bullitt, 57 Penn. St. 221.

as the amount of one of several debts, the presumption is that it was intended to pay that debt.¹—A debtor who owes both individually and as executor in distinct debts is supposed, all other things being equal, to intend to pay his own debt.² And when he pays out of partnership funds, the inference is it is to a partnership debt.³—When, upon the death of a partner, the surviving partners continue to deal with a particular creditor, and payments are made him by the surviving partners on a continuous account, the payment is to be appropriated to the partnership debts.⁴—But the circumstance that the debtor sent the money through a party who was his security for one of several debts he owed the payee, is not sufficient ground to infer that the payment was meant by the debtor to go to the debt thus secured.⁵

§ 925. When a creditor holds several claims against an insolvent debtor, and when a specific sum is sent to him on account of these debts, the object being to effect a composition for debts, there must be equality of appropriation, and the creditor cannot apply the money to the reduction of debts for which he holds security, leaving others unreduced.⁶—Where a surety has paid the debt in full, the creditor “will be trustee for him as to the claim to the composition upon that debt.”⁷ The same rule applies with dividends in bankruptcy; they are appropriated ratably in payment of all the debts.”⁸

Insolvent
distribu-
tion must
be equal.

§ 926. The right of appropriation cannot be exercised by any but debtor and creditor. No third party can be heard

¹ *Marryatts v. White*, 2 Stark. 102; *Williams v. Rawlinson*, 3 Bing. 71; 2 and see *Shaw v. Picton*, 4 B. & C. 715; *Parsons*, 633; citing *Smith v. Wigley*, *Kirby v. Marlborough*, 2 M. & S. 18; 3 Moore & S. 174; *Livermore v. Rand*, *Roberts v. Garnie*, 3 Caines, 14; see 6 Fost. 85.

Tayloe v. Sandiford, 7 Wheat. 14; *Stone v. Seymour*, 15 Wend. 19; *Mitchell v. Dall*, 2 H. & Gill, 160; *Scott v. Fisher*, 4 T. B. Mon. 387.

² *Goddard v. Cox*, 2 Strange, 1194; *Sawyer v. Tappan*, 14 N. H. 352; *Fowke v. Bowie*, 4 Har. & J. 566.

³ *Thompson v. Brown*, M. & M. 40.

⁴ *Simson v. Ingham*, 2 B. & C. 65;

⁵ *Mitchell v. Dall*, 4 Gill & J. 361.

⁶ *Bardwell v. Lydall*, 7 Bing. 489; *Thompson v. Hudson*, L. R. 6 Ch. 320; see *Merrimack Bk. v. Brown*, 12 N. H. 320; *Com. Bk. v. Cunningham*, 24 Pick. 270.

⁷ *Paley v. Field*, 12 Ves. 435.

⁸ *Leake*, 2d ed. 916, citing *Raikes v. Todd*, 8 A. & E. 846.

for the purpose of compelling any specific appropriations.¹

Right is
one which
third par-
ties cannot
exercise.

And a surety cannot compel such an application of payments by the creditor as would most relieve him.²

If, however, such may be inferred to be the intention of the debtor, the payment will be appropriated to relieve the surety.³

§ 927. If the debtor does not expressly appropriate, and if there are no circumstances from which an implied appropriation on his part may be inferred, the right of designation, according to the weight of authority in England and the United States, is with the creditor. Hence, if there be no designation by the debtor, express or implied, no matter what may be the grade of the debt, the creditor may select it for payment, in preference to other debts of higher sanction. Thus he may prefer a simple contract debt to a specialty.⁴ If the debtor's intent is ascertainable, however, that of the creditor must yield.⁵ And where a creditor holds two claims against a debtor who pays in money without designation, one of those claims being on the creditor's individual account, and the other on his account as trustee, the creditor cannot absorb the payment in his own debt, to the exclusion of the debt due his *cestui que trust*.⁶

¹ Gordon v. Hobart, 2 Story, 264.

² Wright v. Hickling, L. R. 2 C. P. 199; see Plomer v. Long, 1 Stark. 122.

³ Marryatts v. White, 2 Stark. 101; but see Postmaster-General v. Norvell, Gilpin, 106.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 930 et seq.; Peters v. Anderson, 5 Taunt. 596; Bosangust v. Wray, 6 Taunt. 597; Cremer v. Higginson, 1 Mason, 338; Commonwealth Nat. Bank v. Mech. Nat. Bank, 94 U. S. 437; Mayor of Alexandria v. Patton, 4 Cranch, 317; Franklin Bank v. Cooper, 36 Me. 222; Pierce v. Knight, 31 Vt. 701; Harding v. Tefft, 75 N. Y. 461; Smuller v. Union Canal Co., 37 Penn. St. 68; Lewis v. Pease, 85 Ill.

35; Davis Sewing Machine v. Buchlis, 89 Ill. 237; Hamilton v. Benbury, 2 Hayw. 385; Brice v. Hamilton, 12 S. C. 32; Hargroves v. Cooke, 15 Ga. 321; Allen v. Mining Co., 73 Mo. 688; Trullinger v. Kofoed, 7 Oregon, 228; see other cases cited *infra*.

⁵ *Supra*, § 924; Reed v. Boardman, 20 Pick. 441.

⁶ Cole v. Trull, 9 Pick. 325; Scott v. Ray, 18 Pick. 361; see Mahaiwe Bank v. Peck, 127 Mass. 298. That a creditor may appropriate by our law at his election, in all cases where the debtor does not appropriate, see *infra*, § 929; and see Harding v. Wormley, 8 Baxt. 578; Hyatt v. Clements, 65 Ind. 12.

§ 928. A debtor who makes a payment to a creditor to whom he owes several debts, has the right, according to the Roman law, to determine the debt to which the payment is to be appropriated. If he omits to do this, the tests are as follows: (1) The most pressing debt is to be first paid. (2) If all the debts are equally pressing, the oldest has the preference. (3) If all are of the same date, then there is to be an equal apportionment. The reasoning is that a debtor who leaves it to the creditor under such circumstances, creates thereby an agency, and the creditor is bound in such matters by the ordinary rules of agency, and must adopt the mode of appropriation that would be most beneficial to the debtor. Hence, by this view, when the payment is made on account of principal and interest, the appropriation goes first to interest and then to principal.¹ The German code takes another view of this vexed question, rejecting the theory that the creditor in such cases is to act as the debtor's agent, and making the creditor's interest the test. If, therefore, there is no designation by the debtor, the payment is to be appropriated as follows: (1) The debt first called in to be first paid. (2) If all are of the same date, then the debt which has the least security is to be first paid. (3) If all stand in this respect on the same footing, then that bearing the highest interest is to be first extinguished. (4) If all are in this respect alike, then the oldest has priority. (5) If these tests all fail, then the debts are to be paid *pari passu*.² The Austrian code, on the other hand, follows the Roman law as above given.³

By Roman law creditor is regarded as the debtor's agent in appropriation.

¹ L. 1-8, D. h. t.; L. 1, C. h. t.; L. 48, 94, § 3; L. 97, 103, D. h. t. Several learned treatises have been published on this topic: Mittag, specimen de solutione, quae fit ab eo, qui ex pluribus causis debitor alterius existit. 1795. Gmelin, diss. de gravior causa, in quam a debitore ex pluribus causis solutio facta praesumitur. Tub. 1801. See Story's Eq. Jur. 12th Am. ed. § 459 a; Poth. Pand. Lib. 46, tit. 43, art. 1. An analysis of the positions of Pothier will be found in Story, *ut supra*.

² Koch, § 155.

³ The Roman law is thus correctly stated by Tindal, C. J.: "In the absence of any express declaration by either, the inquiry was what application would be most beneficial to the debtor." Clayton's case, 1 Mer. 606. An exposition of the Roman law will be found in the Am. Law Mag. for April, 1843, and in Pattison v. Hull, 9 Cow. 773 *et seq.*; see, also, 1 Am. Lead. Cas. 123 *et seq.*

§ 929. The English rule is that when there is no designation by the debtor, the creditor, as we have seen, has the right of appropriation. "According to the law of England, the debtor," it is said by Tindal, C. J., "may, in the first instance, appropriate the payment, *solvitur in modum solventis*; if he omit to do so, the creditor may make the appropriation, *recipitur in modum recipientis*."¹ He may appropriate the payment, therefore, in the way most favorable to himself and least favorable to his debtor.² If he has a security for several debts, he may appropriate the proceeds to any one of the debts he may desire first to extinguish.³ But funds arising from a security for a particular debt, must be appropriated to pay that debt.⁴ On the other hand, where the debts consisted in a mortgage and a book account, it was held that an undesignated payment should be given to the mortgage, as most conducive to the interests of the debtor;⁵ and on the same principle undesignated payments will be applied to debts bearing interest in preference to debts not bearing interest.⁶

§ 930. A creditor, also, under the English system, may appropriate a payment to a claim not recoverable by action, provided there is a sufficient consideration to support the claim.⁷ Even a debt barred by the

¹ *Mills v. Fowkes*, 5 Bing. N. C. 461; see *Clayton's case*, 1 Mer. 605.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 918; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Peters v. Anderson*, 5 Taunt. 596; *Bosanquet v. Wray*, 6 Taunt. 597; *Goddard v. Hodges*, 1 C. & M. 33; *Kirby v. Marlborough*, 2 M. & S. 18; *Cremer v. Higginson*, 1 Mason, 338; *Com. Nat. Bk. v. Mech. Nat. Bk.*, 94 U. S. 437; *Shipsey v. Bowery Bk.*, 59 N. Y. 485; *Harding v. Tift*, 75 N. Y. 461; *Smuller v. Union Canal Co.*, 37 Penn. St. 68; *Lewis v. Pease*, 85 Ill. 35; *Davis Sewing Machine v. Buckles*, 89 Ill. 237; *Jones v. Kilgore*, 2 Rich. Eq. 64; *Caxwell v. De Vaughan*, 55 Ga. 643; see *Upham v. Lefavour*, 11 Met. 184.

³ *Dickin ex parte*, L. R. 20 Eq. 767;

Harding v. Tift, 75 N. Y. 461. See *Ramsay v. Warner*, 97 Mass. 8, 13, 14, for discussion of this topic by Hoar, J., and see *Field v. Holland*, 6 Cranch, 8.

⁴ *Stoveld v. Eade*, 4 Bing. 154; *Pattison v. Hall*, 9 Cow. 747; *Sanders v. Knox*, 57 Ala. 80; and see cases *supra*, § 924. That the creditor's interest is the test, see further *Field v. Holland*, 6 Cranch, 8; *Briggs v. Williams*, 2 Vt. 283; *Capen v. Alden*, 5 Met. 268.

⁵ *Pattison v. Hull*, 9 Cow. 747.

⁶ *McTavish v. Carroll*, 1 Md. Ch. 160; *Bussey v. Gant*, 10 Humph. 238; and see *Ch. on Cont.* 11th Am. ed. 1114, citing further *Briggs v. Williams*, 2 Vt. 286; *Dows v. Morewood*, 10 Barb. 183.

⁷ *Leake*, 2d ed. 919; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Arnold v. Poole*, 4

statute of limitation may be thus paid.¹ The creditor may also appropriate to a debt which is not recoverable under the statute of frauds,² or for which, by local law, no suit can be brought; *e. g.*, debts to which local penalties are attached.³ But the creditor cannot apply a payment to a debt in itself illegal, as "a claim for usurious interest, a charge for articles sold contrary to law, and the like."⁴ Nor can he appropriate to an unfounded claim for which there is no legal or equitable consideration.⁵—Where there are two classes of claims, one legal and the other illegal, a payment not specially designated will be appropriated to the discharge of the legal debt,⁶ and there can be no appropriation by the creditor to a debt which is for a consideration explicitly prohibited by the *lex fori*.⁷—An appropriation by the creditor so as to extinguish part of a debt barred by the statute of limitations, does not take the remainder of the debt out of the statute.⁸

M. & G. 860; *Philpott v. Jones*, 2 A. & E. 41; *Owens v. Denton*, 1 C. M. & R. 712.

¹ *Mills v. Fowkes*, 5 Bing. N. C. 455; *Waugh v. Cope*, 6 M. & W. 824; *Ashby v. James*, 11 M. & W. 542; *Jackson v. Barker*, 1 Dill. 311; *Murphy v. Webber*, 61 Me. 478; *Brown v. Burnes*, 67 Me. 535; *Bancroft v. Dumas*, 21 Vt. 456; and cases cited *infra*, § 933; *Pond v. Williams*, 1 Gray, 630; *Ramsay v. Warner*, 97 Mass. 8; but see *Burn v. Boulton*, 2 C. B. 476; *Wood v. Wylds*, 6 Eng. Ark. 754; *Moniteau Bk. v. Miller*, 73 Mo. 187.

² *Haynes v. Nice*, 100 Mass. 327.

³ *Dawson v. Remnant*, 6 Esp. 24, which Mr. Benj. (Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 788) tells us is approved in *Laycock v. Pickles*, 4 B. & S. 507; *Philpott v. Jones*, 2 Ad. & E. 41; *Crookshank v. Rose*, 5 C. & P. 19.

⁴ Story Eq. Jur. 12th ed. § 4596; citing *Caldwell v. Wentworth*, 14 N. H. 431; *Ayer v. Hawkins*, 19 Vt. 26; *Bancroft v. Dumas*, 21 Vt. 456; *Rohan*

v. Hanson, 11 Cush. 44; *Parchman v. M'Kinney*, 12 Sm. & M. 631.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 920; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 749; *Nash v. Hodgson*, 6 M. & G. 474; *Lamprell v. Billericay Union*, 3 Ex. 283; *James v. Child*, 2 Cr. & J. 678; *West Branch Bk. v. Moorehead*, 5 W. & S. 542; *Quigley v. Duffey*, 52 Iowa, 610; *Scheffer v. Tozier*, 25 Minn. 478.

⁶ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Wright v. Laing*, 3 B. & C. 165; *Caldwell v. Wentworth*, 14 N. H. 431; *Kidder v. Norris*, 18 N. H. 532; *Bancroft v. Dumas*, 21 Vt. 456; *Rohan v. Hanson*, 11 Cush. 44; *Warren v. Chapman*, 105 Mass. 87; *Huffstater v. Hayes*, 64 Barb. 573; *Albert v. Lindau*, 46 Md. 334.

⁷ *Starkey v. Gabby*, 1 Cr. & Dix, 248; *Phillips v. Moses*, 65 Me. 70; *Caldwell v. Wentworth*, 14 N. H. 431; *Bancroft v. Dumas*, 21 Vt. 456; *Rohan v. Hanson*, 11 Cush. 44; *Ramsay v. Warner*, 97 Mass. 8; *Warren v. Chapman*, 105 Mass. 87.

⁸ *Nash v. Hodgson*, 6 M. & G. 474;

§ 931. When a payment is made, without designation, it will be applied to a debt which is due, in preference to one not yet matured.¹ A debt absolutely due will also be paid in preference to a debt due contingently.²

Debts
overdue
preferred.

§ 932. The creditor is entitled to reserve his election until it is necessary for him to render an account to the debtor, or until he is otherwise called upon to report his action.³ Whether and when an election takes place, is to be inferred, in absence of direct statement by him, from all the circumstances of the case.⁴ He is not precluded by a mere private entry on his books, not

Creditor's
election
continues
until com-
municated.

Ramsay v. Warner, 97 Mass. 8. In Ramsay v. Warner, 97 Mass. 13, 14, Hoar, J., said: "The debtor is not presumed to have intended to renew a promise which is no longer legally binding upon him, although he has put it into his creditor's power to satisfy *pro tanto* a claim upon which he has lost his legal remedy. But when there are several ascertained and admitted debts, none of which are barred by the statute, and a payment is made without an application of it by the debtor, we think a different rule applies, and that the payment, when applied by the creditor, has all the effect upon the debt to which it is applied that it would have if it had been made by the debtor expressly on account of it. This distinction between debts barred by the statute at the time when the payment is made, and those not then barred, was expressly recognized in Pond v. Williams, 1 Gray, 630. See Nash v. Hodgson, 6 De G. M. & G. 474; Ayer v. Haskins, 19 Vt. 26; Bancroft v. Dumas, 21 Vt. 456; Armistead v. Brooks, 18 Ark. 521; Burr v. Burr, 36 Penn. St. 284.—*The debtor must be held to intend the full effect of a payment upon whatever debt the creditor may elect to apply it.*"

¹ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 747, note n'; McDowell v. Blackstone Canal, 5 Mason, 11; Caldwell v. Wentworth, 14 N. H. 431; Baker v. Stackpoole, 9 Cow. 420; Stone v. Seymour, 15 Wend. 19; Seymour v. Sexton, 10 Watts, 255; Law v. Sutherland, 5 Grat. 357; Bacon v. Brown, 1 Bibb, 334; Bobe v. Stickney, 36 Ala. 482; see Hunter v. Osterhoudt, 11 Barb. 33.

² Portland Bank v. Brown, 22 Me. 295; Niagara Bk. v. Rosevelt, 9 Cow. 409.

³ Simson v. Ingham, 2 B. & C. 65; 3 D. & R. 249; Seymour v. Marvin, 11 Barb. 80; Dorsey v. Wayman, 6 Gill, 59; cited Benj. on Sales, 3 Am. ed. § 749; and see Emery v. Tichout, 13 Vt. 15; Stamford Bk. v. Benedict, 15 Conn. 438; Smith v. Lloyd, 11 Leigh, 517; Heilbron v. Bissell, 1 Bailey Eq. 435.

⁴ Shaw v. Picton, 4 B. & C. 715; S. C., 7 D. & R. 201; Frazer v. Bunn, 8 C. & P. 704; Williams v. Griffith, 5 M. & W. 300; Starrett v. Barber, 20 Me. 457; Seymour v. Van Slyck, 8 Wend. 403; Allen v. Culver, 3 Denio, 284; Heilbron v. Bissell, 1 Bailey Eq. 430; Brady v. Hill, 1 Mo. 315.

communicated to the debtor, from appropriating as he thinks best.¹ So far as concerns third parties, he must make the election in a reasonable time, but so far as concerns the debtor he may hold back the election until called upon by the debtor to act.² But when once the application is communicated to the debtor, it cannot be recalled.³ On the other hand, a debtor who receives without objection an account current from his creditor appropriating payments to less onerous debts ratifies by his silence the appropriation so made.⁴—The debtor's right of designation cannot be defeated by the creditor appropriating the money before the debtor has had the opportunity of exercising his discretion.⁵

§ 933. According to Sir W. Grant, "there is no room [in accounts] for any other appropriation than that which arises from the order in which the receipts and payments take place and are carried into the account; presumably it is the sum first paid in that is first drawn out; it is the first item on the debit side of the account which is discharged or reduced by the first item on the credit side; the appropriation is made by the very act of setting the two items against each other. Upon that principle all accounts are settled, and particularly cash accounts."⁶ Even when payments are made on a banker's account, deposits against drafts, the items paid in go to balance those paid out, though some of the items paid in turn out to be trust moneys.⁷ This view has been accepted in the United States.⁸ This, however,

In accounts when there is no designation, first debt is to be paid.

¹ *Simson v. Ingham*, *ut supra*; *Seymour v. Marvin*, 11 Barb. 80; *Dorsey v. Wagman*, 6 Gill, 59.

² *Bosanquet v. Wray*, 6 Taunt. 597; *Mayor, etc. v. Patten*, 4 Cranch, 317.

³ See cases cited *supra*, *Hilton v. Burley*, 2 N. H. 193; *Seymour v. Marvin*, 11 Barb. 80; *McMaster v. Merrick*, 41 Mich. 505; see generally *Portland Bk. v. Brown*, 22 Me. 295; *Emery v. Tick-out*, 13 Vt. 15; *Stamford Bk. v. Benedict*, 15 Conn. 438.

⁴ *McLear v. Hunsicker*, 30 La. An. Pt. II. 1225.

⁵ *Waller v. Lacy*, 1 M. & G. 54.

⁶ *Clayton's case*, 1 Mer. 608; adopted *Leake*, 2d ed. 917; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Bodenham v. Purchas*, 2 B. & Ald. 39; *Williams v. Griffith*, 5 M. & W. 300; *Brown v. Adams*, L. R. 4 Ch. 764; *Thompson v. Hudson*, L. R. 6 Ch. Ap. 320; *Simson v. Cooke*, 1 Bing. 452; *Bloom v. Kern*, 30 La. An. Part II. 1263. See *Cabada v. De Jongh*, 10 Phila. 422.

⁷ *Brown v. Adams*, L. R. 4 Ch. 764.

⁸ 1 *Chitty on Cont.* 11th Am. ed. 1116; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Story Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. § 459 b; *Story on Cont.* § 1154; *U. S. v. Wardwell*, 5

is on the supposition that there is no specific designation by either debtor or creditor.¹ Nor does the fact that the earlier debts are barred by the statute of limitations preclude the application of items in a general account to such earlier debts.² But the presumption of appropriation in order of date may be overcome by proof of an understanding to the contrary, which understanding may be inferred from all the facts.³ The presumption, however, is not rebutted by proof that the earlier items are for goods sold on condition that they are not to become the property of the purchaser till paid for, although the seller made a memorandum of this condition in the book in which the account was entered.⁴—When some of the makers of a joint and several note make payment of their shares of the principal and interest due from them at the date of pay-

Mason, 82; U. S. v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Wheat. 720; Jones v. U. S., 7 How. 681; Gass v. Stinson, 3 Sumn. 99; Miliken v. Tufts, 31 Me. 497; Caldwell v. Wentworth, 14 N. H. 431; Upham v. Lefavour, 11 Met. 184; Crompton v. Pratt, 105 Mass. 255; Fairchild v. Holby, 10 Conn. 175; Jackson v. Johnson, 74 N. Y. 607; Truscott v. King, 2 Seld. 147; Germ. Luth. Ch. v. Heise, 44 Md. 453; Sprague v. Hazenwinkle, 53 Ill. 419; Hill v. Robbins, 22 Mich. 475; Smith v. Lloyd, 11 Leigh, 518; Price v. Dowdy, 34 Ark. 285; and see generally *Postmaster-General v. Furber*, 4 Mason, 336; *McKenzie v. Nevius*, 22 Me. 138; *Miller v. Miller*, 23 Me. 24; *Dows v. Morewood*, 10 Barb. 183; *Baker v. Stackpoole*, 9 Cow. 435.

¹ *Supra*, § 923. In *Field v. Holland*, 6 Cranch, 8, it was held that the most precarious security should be paid first. This, however, is inconsistent with the general current of authority.

When a firm changes its membership, but continues to deal with a particular creditor whose claims continue to run on unextinguished, payments made by the firm, as reconstituted, go

on this principle, to extinguish debts due by the original firm. *Bodenham v. Purchas*, 2 B. & Ald. 39; *Hooper v. Keay*, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 178.

² *Williams v. Griffith*, 5 M. & W. 300; *Ashby v. James*, 11 M. & W. 542; and cases cited *supra*, § 930.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 917; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 748; *Henniker v. Wigg*, 4 Q. B. 792; *Boys in re*, L. R. 10 Eq. 467; *City Discount Co. v. McLean*, L. R. 9 C. P. 692.

⁴ *Crompton v. Pratt*, 105 Mass. 255. "The money paid beyond lawful interest on account of a debt is in legal effect a payment upon the debt. In this case the fact was well stated as constituting payment, and the objection to relief on that account cannot be sustained. Each debt was a continuous thing, and the last notes given in renewal of each debt repaid only what was justly remaining due upon that debt. *Upham v. Brimhall*, 11 Met. 526; *Auburn Bank v. Lewis*, 75 N. Y. 516; *Hiatt v. Griswold*, 5 Fed. Rep. 573." *Wheeler, J., Loveridge v. Larned*, U. S. Cir. Ct. N. Y. 1881, 12 Rep. 324.

ment, the payment is to be applied to the *pro rata* payment of principal as well as of interest due by the parties so paying.¹

§ 934. Where there is no running account, and no designation by either debtor or creditor, then, according to Judge Story, "if there are various debts due to the creditor, the court will make the application according to its own view of the law and equity of the case."² If we take the theory of the Roman law, that the creditor in such cases acts as the agent of the debtor, then we would appropriate the payment in such a way as to best promote the interests of a debtor. If we are obliged to reject this view, then, in default of designation on either side, the court must appropriate in such a way as best to carry out their common intention as developed in the transactions between them.³ Hence, as we have already seen, a mortgage-debt will be paid in preference to a book-account debt;⁴ and interest will be extinguished before principal is reduced.⁵ —Where an agent who has mingled his principal's accounts with his own, receives a remittance from a debtor to both, it has been held that it should be divided *pro rata* between the two;⁶ though the better view would be that where the agent is in the wrong in mingling the accounts, the whole payment should go to the principal.⁷

In other cases the law divides equitably.

II. PARTIAL PAYMENT.

§ 935. A receipt of part of a debt operates only to discharge the debt *pro tanto*, and does not, without an agree- Receipt for

¹ Donaldson v. Cothran, 60 Ga. 603. Peck, 127 Mass. 298; Williams v.

² Gordon v. Hobart, 2 Story, 264. Vance, 9 S. C. 344.

³ U. S. v. January, 7 Cranch, 572; ⁴ Pattison v. Hull, 9 Cow. 747; cited *supra*, § 929.

U. S. v. Wardwell, 5 Mason, 85; Gass v. Stinson, 3 Sumner, 98; U. S. v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Wheat. 720; U. S. v. Eckford, 17 Pet. 251; 1 How. 250; Pattison v. Hull, 9 Cow. 747; Seymour v. Van Slyck, 8 Wend. 403; Smith v. Lloyd, 11 Leigh, 512; McCauley v. Holtz, 62 Ind. 205; Applegate v. Koons, 74 Ind. 247; Callahan v. Boazman, 21 Ala. 246; see Mahaiwe Bk. v. Peck, 127 Mass. 298; Williams v. Vance, 9 S. C. 344.

⁵ Story v. Livingston, 13 Pet. 360; Dean v. Williams, 17 Mass. 417; People v. New York, 5 Cow. 331; Spires v. Hamot, 8 W. & S. 17; and cases cited 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1114.

⁶ Barrett v. Lewis, 2 Pick. 123; Cole v. Trull, 9 Pick. 325; Scott v. Ray, 18 Pick. 361.

⁷ Wh. on Ag. §§ 231, 523.

less sum
may extin-
guish debt,
if there be
distinctive
considera-
tion.

ment on a distinctive consideration, extinguish the remainder of the debt.¹ But if there be a distinctive consideration for the release of the residue, it operates as an extinguishment.² This has been held to be the case where the fractional payment is made as part of a general composition by which there is to be a general release by creditors in consideration of an assignment of the debtor's entire property;³ where specific property is assigned which the creditor could not otherwise have reached;⁴ where a third party agrees to supply security for the fractional payment on condition of the release or make such payment in cash;⁵ where the payment is anticipated and a discount is taken off for this reason;⁶ where the payment is part of a compromise of litigation;⁷ where the payment is of a negotiable security which gives the creditor some special advantage;⁸ and where the payment is part of an arrangement with other joint debtors.⁹ Proof of payment of a part, also, may lead, with other circumstances, to the inference of the payment of the whole.¹⁰—After suit is brought, payment of the debt with-

¹ *Supra*, § 504; *infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*, Leake, 2d. ed. 888; *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Strange, 426; 1 Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 595; *Fitch v. Sutton*, 5 East, 230; *Down v. Hatcher*, 10 A. & E. 121; *Mitchell v. Cragg*, 10 M. & W. 367; *Bailey v. Day*, 26 Me. 88; *Blanchard v. Noyes*, 3 N. H. 518; *Wheeler v. Wheeler*, 11 Vt. 60; *Warren v. Skinner*, 20 Conn. 559; *Harriman v. Harriman*, 12 Gray, 341; *Seymour v. Minturn*, 17 Johns. 169; *Carraway v. Odeneal*, 56 Miss. 223; *Cavaness v. Ross*, 33 Ark. 572. As to creating a new obligation, see *supra*, § 852.

² *Infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*; see *Cooper v. Parker*, 15 C. B. 822; *Hinckley v. Arey*, 27 Me. 362; *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391; see for authorities and other distinctions, *supra*, § 504. That this takes place in novation, see *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

³ *Steinman v. Magnus*, 11 East. 390; *Evans v. Powis*, 1 Ex. 601; and cases cited *infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*

⁴ *Eaton v. Lincoln*, 13 Mass. 424; *infra*, § 1001.

⁵ *Welby v. Drake*, 1 C. & P. 557; *Henderson v. Stobart*, 5 Ex. 99; and cases cited *supra*, § 504; and *infra*, §§ 1001-3.

⁶ *Supra*, § 504; Leake, 2d ed. 888; citing *Pinnel's case*, 5 Co. 117 a; and see *Smith v. Brown*, 3 Hawks, 580; and cases cited § 504; and *infra*, §§ 1000 *et seq.*

⁷ *Supra*, § 504; *Taylor v. Manners*, L. R. 1 Ch. 48; *Keen v. Vaughan*, 48 Penn. St. 477; and see cases cited *supra*, §§ 198, 533.

⁸ *Supra*, § 504; *Sibree v. Tripp*, 15 M. & W. 23; *Lichfield v. Green*, 1 H. & N. 884; and cases cited *infra*, §§ 954, 1003; *Goddard v. O'Brien*, 46 L. T. N. S. 306.

⁹ *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391; *supra*, § 527.

¹⁰ *Henderson v. Moore*, 5 Cranch, 11.

out the costs does not relieve the debtor from liability for the costs.¹ It is otherwise when suit has not yet been brought.²

§ 936. A plaintiff, by electing to take judgment for part of his claim, may absorb the whole claim in the judgment. "The plea of *res judicata* applies, except in special cases, not only to points upon which the court was actually required to form an opinion and pronounce a judgment, but to every point which properly belonged to the subject of litigation, and which the parties, exercising reasonable diligence, might have brought forward."³—"There is nothing in this language applied to the facts in the case, however," so it has been declared by high authority in this country, "which gives support to the doctrine that whenever, in one action, a party might have brought forward a particular ground of recovery or defence, and neglected to do so, he is in a subsequent suit between the same parties, *upon a different cause of action*, precluded from availing himself of such ground."⁴ But a creditor who arbitrarily splits up any one cause of action into separate suits exhausts his remedy by suing the first suit to judgment.⁵

Plaintiff by
suing part
of claim
to judg-
ment may
extinguish
whole.

§ 937. No matter how great may be the amount claimed in a suit for unliquidated damages, it may be extinguished by a comparatively small sum paid in cash. The cash element in the payment forms the consideration; money paid in hand having a real value which is a counterpoise for an unliquidated claim for a far larger amount.⁶

Fractional
cash pay-
ment may
extinguish
larger un-
liquidated
claim.

¹ Goodwin v. Cremer, 18 Q. B. 757; Stevens v. Briggs, 14 Vt. 44; Emerson v. White, 10 Gray, 351; and cases cited *infra*, §§ 970 *et seq.*

² Beaumont v. Greathead, 3 D. & L. P. C. 631.

³ Henderson v. Henderson, 3 Hare, 115; Wigram, V.-C.; see Chamley v. Lord Dunsany, 2 Sch. & L. 718; and see *infra*, § 1007.

⁴ Field, J., Cromwell v. Sac, 94 U. S. 351; see Aurora City v. West, 7 Wall. 82; Howard v. Kimball, 65 Me. 308.

⁵ Wh. on Ev. § 788; Baker v. Stinchfield, 57 Me. 363; Warren v. Comings, 6 Cush. 103; Smith v. Jones, 15 Johns. R. 229; Willard v. Sperry, 16 Johns. R. 121; Miller v. Covert, 1 Wend. 487; Ingraham v. Hall, 11 S. & R. 78; Nave v. Wilson, 33 Ind. 294; Buford v. Kersey, 48 Miss. 643; Wickersham v. Whedon, 33 Mo. 561; and see *infra*, § 1007.

⁶ Wilkinson v. Byers, 1 A. & E. 106. For other cases see *supra*, §§ 521 *a*, 533, 858; *infra*, § 1000.

III. RECEIPTS.

§ 938. A receipt, though written, is open to parol explanation; and the party by whom it was signed may show, as against the other party, that it was made by mistake, or does not exhibit the real state of facts.¹ The same rule exists in equity.² Nor is the rule limited to informal receipts. It applies to bankers' pass-books;³ to certificates of deposit;⁴ and to receipts of public officers.⁵—At common law, it should be remembered, a receipt under seal concludes the party making it, although in equity it may be explained or set aside on ground of mistake or fraud.⁶—Parol evidence, also, is admissible to show that a warranty is incidental to an informal written receipt or to a bill of parcels.⁷—Whether a receipt for a recent charge leads to the inference of an extinguishment of prior claims depends upon all the circumstances of the case. Such an inference may be drawn *prima facie* from the mere fact of the receipt of the later charge, but it is open to rebuttal.⁸—Possession of the document, also, by which the debt is expressed leads to an inference of payment.⁹ Payment may also be inferred in cases where an employee, who was in the prior habit of coming regularly for his wages, left his employment without com-

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 1064; *Graves v. Key*, 3 B. & Ad. 318; *Foster v. Dawber*, 6 Ex. 848; *Edwards v. Hancher*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 111; *Good ex parte*, L. R. 5 C. D. 46; *Richardson v. Beede*, 43 Me. 161; *Nelson v. Weeks*, 111 Mass. 223; *Grinnell v. Spink*, 128 Mass. 25; *Foster v. Newbrough*, 58 N. Y. 481; *Middlesex v. Thomas*, 20 N. J. Eq. 39; *Russell v. Church*, 65 Penn. St. 9; *Walker v. Christian*, 21 Grat. 291; *Ditch v. Vollhardt*, 82 Ill. 134; *Wilson v. Derr*, 69 N. C. 137.

² *Lee v. R. R.*, 6 Ch. 534.

³ *Com. Bk. v. Rhine*, 3 Macq. Sc. 64.

⁴ *Hotchkiss v. Mosher*, 48 N. Y. 478.

⁵ *Lewis v. Webber*, 116 Mass. 450.

⁶ *Baker v. Dewey*, 1 B. & C. 704.

deed does not estop, but may be disputed between the parties, see *Lampon v. Corke*, 5 B. & Ald. 606.

⁷ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 622; *Allen v. Pink*, 4 M. & W. 140; *Bradford v. Manly*, 13 Mass. 137; *Stacy v. Kemp*, 97 Mass. 168; *Foot v. Bentley*, 44 N. Y. 166; *Perrine v. Cooley*, 10 Vroom, 449.

⁸ Wh. on Ev. § 1362; *Colsell v. Budd*, 1 Camp. 27; *Hodgen v. Wight*, 36 Me. 326; *Attleborough v. Middleborough*, 10 Pick. 378; *Crompton v. Pratt*, 105 Mass. 255; *Walton v. Eldridge*, 1 Allen, 203; *Deeker v. Livingston*, 15 Johns. 479.

⁹ See Wh. on Ev. § 1362, and authorities there cited.

That a receipt of purchase-money in a

plaint of non-payment, and made no suggestion that he had not been fully paid until several years had elapsed.¹

§ 939. While receipts may be explained or disputed between the parties, they may estop as to third parties.² As an illustration of this may be noticed receipts for purchase money which may bind the party receipting as to purchasers without notice, and yet be open to explanation between the parties.³ Between the insured and underwriter, also, a receipt by a broker, acting as agent of the underwriter, may be conclusive, and yet may be open to correction between the broker and the underwriter.⁴ A receipt by a public officer may be in like manner an estoppel as against vendees with notice.⁵

Receipts
may estop
as to third
parties.

§ 940. When two persons sign a receipt jointly, it is admissible for one of them to show that he acted merely as surety, and that the money was exclusively received by the other party.⁶ One of several trustees, also, who have signed a joint receipt, may show that the money was received by his fellow trustees, and that he himself signed under circumstances which relieve him from liability.⁷ And where one of several trustees receipts for a debt due to the trust, his co-trustees may show that the receipt was in fraud of their rights.⁸

One of sev-
eral joint
receivers
may show
that the
money was
received by
his asso-
ciates.

§ 941. The law with regard to releases is hereafter distinctively discussed. It is enough at this place to say that to enable a release to operate as discharging a claim, it must be either under seal, or must have a sufficient consideration.⁹

Releases
must be
under seal
or must
have suffi-
cient con-
sideration.

¹ *Lucas v. Novosilieski*, 1 Esp. 296; *Sellen v. Norman*, 4 C. & P. 81.

² Wh. on Ev. § 1006; *Wyath v. Hertford*, 3 East, 147; *Jenkins v. Power*, 6 M. & S. 287.

³ Wh. on Ev. § 1066; *Bigelow on Est.* 3d ed. 473-5; *Leake*, 2d ed. 905; *Kennedy v. Green*, 3 M. & K. 699; *Hunter v. Walters*, L. R. 7 Ch. 75; *Curtis v. Wakefield*, 15 Pick. 437; *Graves v. Dudley*, 20 N. Y. 76.

⁴ *Jenkins v. Power*, 6 M. & S. 287; *Power v. Butcher*, 10 B. & C. 329.

⁵ *Halsey v. Blood*, 29 Penn. St. 319.

⁶ *Straton v. Rasball*, 2 T. R. 366.

⁷ *Westley v. Clark*, 1 Eden, 357; *Brice v. Stokes*, 11 Ves. 319.

⁸ *Skaife v. Jackson*, 3 B. & C. 421; *Farrar v. Hutchinson*, 9 A. & E. 641; and see *Leake*, 2d ed. 902, where the above examples are given.

⁹ See *infra*, §§ 1031 et seq.

IV. PAYMENT BY AND TO AGENTS, EXECUTORS, TRUSTEES, AND
JOINT DEBTORS.

§ 942. A payment by a third party on behalf of a debtor, though without authority at the time, discharges the debt when afterward adopted by the debtor, but, by the old authorities, not till then.¹ But before ratification by the debtor the payment made by a third party in the debtor's behalf may be recalled, and the money received back, without the debtor's consent.² In England the prevalent view continues to be that a payment by a stranger of a debt without the privity of the debtor does not discharge the debt;³ though this has been questioned, and it has been argued that when a debt is paid by a stranger the creditor has no further claim on it.—“In the case of bills of exchange a payment made by the drawer or endorser to the holder is taken to operate merely in discharge of his own distinct liability, and not in discharge of the acceptor; the holder may afterwards claim the full amount against the acceptor, and so far as he has been paid will claim as trustee for the drawer or endorser who has paid.⁴ But if the bill has been accepted for the accommodation of the drawer, the payment by him will discharge the bill absolutely, because the drawer is the party ultimately liable.”⁵—In the Roman law payment by any person whatsoever extinguished the debt. “Nec tamen interest quis solvat utrum ipse qui debet, *an alius pro eo*; liberatur enim et alio solvente, sive

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 913; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. §§ 741, 756; Read v. Goldring, 2 M. & S. 86; Belshaw v. Bush, 11 C. B. 191; Simpson v. Eggington, 10 Ex. 845; Walter v. James, L. R. 6 Ex. 127; see *infra*, § 1008.

² Walter v. James, L. R. 6 Ex. 127; see comments in Benj. on Sales, § 756.

³ James v. Isaacs, 12 C. B. 791; Kemp v. Balls, 10 Ex. 607; Lucas v. Wilkinson, 1 H. & N. 420. That such has been held to be the rule in New York, see *infra*, § 1008.

⁴ Willes, J., in Cook v. Lister, 3 C.

B. N. S. 594; per cur. in Thurman v. Wild, 11 A. & E. 461, cited in Leake, 2d ed. 912; and see Jones v. Broadhurst, 9 M. & Sc. 173; Simpson v. Eggington, 10 Exch. 845. In this country the rule has been repudiated in Ohio and Iowa, see *infra*, § 1008.

⁵ Jones v. Broadhurst, 9 C. B. 173; Williams v. James, 15 Q. B. 498; Randall v. Moon, 12 C. B. 261; Thornton v. Maynard, L. R. 10 C. P. 695.

⁶ Leake, 2d ed. 913; Lazarus v. Cowie, 3 Q. B. 459; Cook v. Lister, 13

C. B. N. S. 543.

sciente, sive ignorante debitore vel invito solutio fiat.”¹ The Roman law, however, on the whole question of unauthorized agency, took a position widely different from our own; the Roman law in many cases supporting such agency, our law in all cases discountenancing it.² The reasoning already expressed in reference to the policy of permitting strangers to meddle in contracts to which they are not parties, applies to the question of permitting strangers to extinguish debts they do not owe. If a stranger can do this, he may acquire a power over me I may not desire to concede. There may be cases in which it may be to my advantage to keep a debt alive, as where collateral questions of domicil or taxation may be involved, or where, recognizing the moral obligation of a debt, though not technically due, I may not choose to have a new creditor whom I do not like imposed on me in the place of one to whom I am used. Even supposing paying the debt may be a great benefit to me, no one should be permitted to burden me with a great benefit without my consent. To many persons the acceptance of such bounties would be intolerable; and the fact that such bounties are received may in other cases work a serious injury to the party receiving them. Yet if the position here contested be sound, any stranger would have a right to intervene and extinguish an indebtedness without the debtor’s consent; and it would follow from this that such an extinguishment would be worked by a tender by a stranger as well as by a payment. Revocable payments, also, cannot bind; but all unratified payments by third parties are revocable. The better view is that a payment only concludes when adopted by the debtor; though on this question the same division of opinion is likely to exist in our courts as exists in reference to the right of third parties to sue on contracts.³

§ 943. Payment made in the usual course of business, either to a general agent of the principal, or to an agent specially authorized to receive the debt, concludes the Payment to an agent

¹ Inst. I. 3, tit. 29, 1.

² See discussion, *supra*, § 787.

³ See for further authorities, *infra*, §

1008; see *supra*, §§ 785 *et seq.* for controversy on this question in general.

duly authorized is payment to principal. principal.¹—The conditions of a general agency, or special agency in the above sense, are discussed in detail in another work.²—Authority to receive payment does not authorize payment by a set-off in an account between the agent and the debtor of debts due from the agent, unless this be in conformity with a course of dealing of which the principal has notice.³

§ 944. When a solicitor is employed to bring suit, a payment to him of the sum in controversy extinguishes the debt.⁴ The same rule applies in this country to attorneys-at-law;⁵ and both here and in England an attorney-at-law may compromise a suit in litigation so as to bind his client, if the transaction be *bona fide*.⁶

But payment to a solicitor's clerk, without special authority, does not bind the principal.⁷ And the possession of mortgages or other securities by a solicitor does not imply authority to the solicitor to receive the debt due on the security.⁸ And an attorney-at-law can only receive currency in payment of debt.⁹

¹ See Wh. on Agency, §§ 206, 580, 741, 783; Catterall v. Hindle, L. R. 1 C. P. 186; S. C., L. R. 2 C. P. 368; De Valengin v. Duffy, 14 Pet. 282; Corlles v. Cummings, 6 Cow. 181; Sangston v. Maitland, 11 Gill & J. 286; Marsh v. Laforest, 1 La. An. 7.

² Wh. on Agency, §§ 135 *et seq.*; and see Noble v. Nugent, 89 Ill. 522.

³ Leake, 3d ed. 909; Bartlett v. Pentland, 10 B. & C. 760; Todd v. Reid, 4 B. & Ald. 605; Stewart v. Aberdeen, 4 M. & W. 211; Underwood v. Nicholls, 7 C. B. 239; Catterall v. Hindle, L. R. 2 C. P. 368; Greenwood v. Burns, 50 Mo. 52. An agent, also, can only receive payment in lawful currency. Wh. on Ag. § 210. That an agent is limited to the reception of currency in payment of debt, see Favenc v. Bennett, 11 East, 38; Todd v. Reid, 4 B. & Ald. 210; Bartlett v. Pentland, 10 B. & C. 760; Underwood v. Nicholls, 17 C. B. 239; Williams v. Evans, L. R. 1 Q. B. 352; Lumpkin v.

Wilson, 5 Heisk. 555; Chapman v. Cowles, 41 Ala. 103; Renard v. Turner, 42 Ala. 117; and see *infra*, § 961.

⁴ Wh. on Ag. § 590; Powel v. Little, 1 W. Bl. 8; Crozer v. Pilling, 4 B. & C. 28; Bevins v. Hulme, 15 M. & W. 96; Swinfen v. Swinfen, 2 De G. & J. 381; Strauss v. Francis, L. R. 1 Q. B. 379; Erwin v. Blake, 8 Pet. 18; Brackett v. Norton, 4 Conn. 517.

⁵ Wh. on Ag. § 583.

⁶ Wh. on Ag. § 590.

⁷ Wh. on Neg. § 604; Kirton v. Braithwaite, 1 M. & W. 310.

⁸ Viney v. Chaplin, 2 D. & J. 468.

⁹ Wh. on Ag. § 583. That an attorney is liable to his client if he receive anything but legal currency in payment of a debt sued on, see Savoury v. Chapman, 8 Dow. 656; Lord v. Burbank, 18 Me. 178; Patten v. Fullerton, 27 Me. 58; Carter v. Talcott, 10 Vt. 471; Kellogg v. Gilbert, 10 Johns. 220; Huston v. Mitchell, 14 S. & R. 307; Kent v. Ricards, 23 Md. Ch. 392; Wil-

§ 945. A factor is entitled to receive payment and give receipt for the price of goods sold;¹ though he is restricted to the reception of currency which is a legal tender;² nor can he set off his private debt against the vendee.³ The same rule obtains as to an auctioneer in possession of goods, unless the conditions of sale limit him;⁴ though an auctioneer has no authority to receive an acceptance as cash.⁵ Authority to receive payment, however, is not ordinarily vested in a broker not entrusted with the possession of goods, unless a contrary business usage be shown.⁶ Whether a person sitting in an office or shop is entitled to receive payment depends upon whether he is then in a position of apparent trust.⁷ If he is obviously not an agent, the payment does not hold.⁸

Factors and auctioneers may receive payment, but not brokers.

§ 946. Payment to one partner is a payment to the firm, each partner being a general agent of the firm for the collection of debts.⁹ It is otherwise, however,

Payment to one partner

kinson v. Holloway, 7 Leigh, 277; Trumbull v. Nicholson, 27 Ill. 149; Child v. Dwight, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq. 171; Jeter v. Haviland, 24 Ga. 252; Cost v. Genette, 1 Port. (Ala.) 212; Perkins v. Grant, 2 La. An. 328; Raleigh v. Bagley, 19 La. An. 172; Garvin v. Lowry, 15 Miss. 24; Wright v. Daley, 26 Tex. 730; Walker v. Scott, 13 Ark. 644; and see cases *supra*, § 943.

¹ Wh. on Ag. § 741; Drinkwater v. Goodwin, Cowp. 251; Hornby v. Lacy, 6 M. & S. 166; Fish v. Kempton, 7 C. B. 687.

² Catterall v. Hindle, L. R. 1 C. B. 186; *infra*, § 961.

³ *Ibid.*; *infra*, § 1021.

⁴ Wh. on Ag. § 642; Sykes v. Giles, 5 M. & W. 645; Williams v. Evans, L. R. 1 Q. B. 352; Taylor v. Wilson, 11 Met. 44; Broughton v. Siloway, 114 Mass. 71; Yourt v. Hopkins, 24 Ill. 326.

⁵ Williams v. Evans, L. R. 1 Q. B. 352; Townes v. Birchett, 12 Leigh, 173.

⁶ Wh. on Ag. § 713; Baring v. Cor-

rie, 2 B. & A. 137; Campbell v. Hassel, 1 Stark. 133; Irwine v. Watson, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 102, 414; Higgins v. Moore, 34 N. Y. 417; Doubleday v. Kress, 50 N. Y. 410; Whiton v. Spring, 74 N. Y. 169; Peck v. Harriott, 6 S. & R. 149; Morris v. Ruddy, 5 C. E. Green, 236; Seiple v. Irwin, 30 Penn. St. 513.

⁷ Wh. on Ag. §§ 128, 130, 801; Kaye v. Brett, 5 Ex. 269; Barrett v. Deere, M. & M. 200; Butler v. Maples, 9 Wall. 766; Jeffrey v. Bigelow, 13 Wend. 518; Cosgrove v. Ogden, 49 N. Y. 255; Dows v. Green, 16 Barb. 72; Adams Ex. Co. v. Schlesinger, 75 Penn. St. 246; Anderson v. State, 22 Oh. St. 305; Lyell v. Sanborn, 2 Mich. 109; see Fleming v. Hector, 2 M. & W. 181; Harris v. Simmermann, 81 Ill. 413; Clark v. Smith, 88 Ill. 298; Eclipse Windmill Co. v. Thorson, 46 Iowa, 181; Fatman v. Leet, 41 Ind. 135; Golding v. Merchant, 43 Ala. 705.

⁸ Sanderson v. Bell, 2 Cr. & M. 304.

⁹ Leake, 2d ed. 910; Henderson v. Wild, 2 Camp. 561; Porter v. Taylor,

is payment
to firm.

when the debtor knows that the firm has given notice that no firm debts should be paid to the partner in question, and when the payment is made in fraud of the firm, as where the debtor's debt to the partner is set off against the firm's claim against the debtor.¹

§ 947. Executors and administrators are empowered by law to give receipts for purchase-money on sales made by them, and the purchaser is, therefore, not bound to see to the application of the purchase-money.²

Executors
may give
receipts.

And for debts generally, any one of several executors or administrators is entitled to give receipts which, if the transaction be *bona fide* and the payment in full, will operate as a discharge.³ Even "a devastavit by one of two executors or administrators shall not charge his companion, provided he has not intentionally or otherwise contributed to it."⁴

§ 948. A debtor who has notice that his nominal creditor is a mere trustee for another person of whose title he is advised, has been held bound to pay the money to the party beneficially interested, supposing that there is nothing in the power creating the trust authorizing the trustee to give receipts.⁵ A power, however, to a trustee to give receipts, will make the trustee's receipts, received *bona fide*, a discharge, provided the terms of

Trustees
have only
limited
power to
give
receipts.

6 M. & S. 156; Gordon v. Ellis, 7 M. & G. 607; Nottidge v. Prichard, 2 Cl. & F. 379; Duff v. East India Co., 15 Ves. 198; Morse v. Bellows, 7 N. H. 568; Noyes v. R. R., 30 Conn. 1; Pierson v. Hooker, 3 Johns. 68; Shepard v. Ward, 8 Wend. 542; Boswell v. Green, 1 Dutcher, 390; Salmon v. Davis, 4 Binn. 375.

¹ Piercy v. Fynney, L. R. 12 Eq. 69.

² Leake, 2d ed. 908; Lewin on Trusts, 329; Williams on Ex. 6th Am. ed. 245, 946-8, 1820; and cases cited in next note.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 908; Williams on Ex. 6th Am. ed. 946-8; Jacomb v. Harwood, 2 Ves. Sen. 265; Charlton v. Durham, L. R. 4 Ch. 433; Williams v. Nixon, 2 Beav. 472; Edmonds v. Cren-

shaw, 14 Pet. 166; Gilman v. Healey, 55 Me. 120; Shaw v. Berry, 35 Me. 279; Tuckerman v. Newhall, 17 Mass. 581; Ames v. Armstrong, 106 Mass. 18; Douglass v. Satterlie, 11 Johns. 16; Bulkley v. Dayton, 14 Johns. 387; Murray v. Blatchford, 1 Wend. 583; Jackson v. Robinson, 4 Wend. 436; Bogert v. Hertell, 4 Hill, 492; 9 Paige, 52; Shreve v. Joyce, 7 Vroom, 48; Devling v. Little, 26 Penn. St. 502; Worth v. M'Aden, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq. 199; Welkerson v. Wootten, 28 Ga. 568; Gaultney v. Nolan, 33 Miss. 569; Nettman v. Schramm, 23 Iowa, 521; Weir v. Mosher, 19 Wis. 311.

⁴ Wms. on Ex. 6th Am. ed. 1620.

⁵ Lewin on Trusts, 4th ed. 310; Leake, 2d ed. 907.

the power be followed;¹ and a power to give receipts may be implied from a power to sell for the payment of debts.²—In England, by statute, a trustee has power to give receipts unless precluded by the power under which he holds.³

§ 949. When one of several joint debtors pays the joint debt, this discharges the other debtors from liability to the common creditor.⁴ If, however, the payment turn out not to be operative, as where a bill is given by one of the debtors which is dishonored at maturity, the debt is revived as against all the joint debtors;⁵ and it has been even held, that where a payment by one joint debtor is avoided as a fraud on his creditors, and the money recovered by other creditors of the debtor making the payment, this does not discharge a co-debtor who is a mere surety for the debt.⁶ A part payment by one joint debtor operates only *pro tanto* in favor of the other joint debtor, though it was accepted in satisfaction of the claim against the debtor so paying.⁷ Whether taking a bill or not from one of several partners, discharges the partnership debt in case of dishonor of the paper, has been much discussed. It has been held that it does if it was so intended by the parties.⁸ The question whether this was the intention, is to be determined inferentially from all the facts.⁹

Payment by one joint debtor discharges the other.

§ 950. When a payment is made *bona fide* to one of several joint creditors, this bars the debt so far as concerns all.¹⁰ If, however, the debtor knew that the creditor

Payment to one joint creditor

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 907; citing *Elliott v. Merryman*, 1 Wh. & T. Lead. Ca. 58.

² *Ibid.*; *Carlyon v. Trescott*, L. R. 20 Eq. 348.

³ 23 and 24 Vict. c. 145.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 831 *et seq.*; Leake, 2d ed. 906; *Beaumont v. Greathead*, 2 C. B. 494; *Thorne v. Smith*, 10 C. B. 659. As to liability of joint debtors generally, see *supra*, §§ 824 *et seq.*

⁵ *Bottomley v. Nuttall*, 5 C. B. N. S. 122; *Keay v. Fenwick*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 745.

⁶ *Petty v. Cooke*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 790.

⁷ *Walters v. Smith*, 2 B. & Ad. 889; *Field v. Robins*, 8 A. & E. 90.

⁸ *Lyth v. Ault*, 7 Exch. 669; *Hart v. Alexander*, 2 M. & W. 484; overruling *Lodge v. Dicus*, 3 B. & Ald. 611. And see *Harris v. Lindsay*, 4 Wash. C. C. 98; *Chase v. Vaughan*, 30 Me. 412; *Arnold v. Camp*, 12 Johns. 409; *Smith v. Rogers*, 17 Johns. 340; *Kean v. Dufresne*, 3 S. & R. 233; *Bernard v. Torrence*, 5 Gill & J. 383.

⁹ See *Waydell v. Luer*, 3 Denio, 410; and cases cited above.

¹⁰ *Supra*, §§ 814 *et seq.*; *Wallace v.*

releases debt. had no authority to receive the payment, or that the payment was irregular and improper, as where a debt due a partnership is paid by fraudulently setting off a separate debt of one of the partners, the payment, as against the other creditors, will be invalid.¹

Joint deposit in bank can only be drawn by joint order. § 951. When money is deposited in bank in the joint name of two or more parties, it is in trust for the use of all, and can only be withdrawn on the joint order of all the depositors.²

§ 952. The purchase of a debt by a stranger is ordinarily for the purpose of taking an assignment of the debt. Purchase by stranger may be to take assignment of debt. The debt remains in full force, the original creditor either holding it to the use of the purchaser, or passing to the purchaser the legal as well as the equitable title.³ Hence, a receipt from a third party of a debt written on a bill of exchange, is no proof of payment, since the price may have been given, not in discharge of the bill, but for the purchase.⁴ As has been already seen, an assignee, by modern practice, can sue in his own name;⁵ though the debtor's assent is necessary to constitute a new contractual relation,⁶ and the assignment is subject to prior equities between assignor and debtor.⁷

V. PAYMENT BY NEGOTIABLE PAPER.

§ 953. The reception of a cheque in payment of a debt suspends the remedy on the debt until the cheque has been pre-

Kelsall, 7 M. & W. 264; Jones v. Yates, 9 B. & C. 532; Heilbut v. Nevill, L. R. 5 C. P. 478; Halsey v. Whitney, 4 Mason, 206; Wiggin v. Tudor, 23 Pick. 444; Bruen v. Marquand, 17 Johns. 58; Napier v. McLeod, 9 Wend. 120; Morrow v. Starke, 4 J. J. Marsh. 367; Henry v. Mt. Pleasant Tp., 70 Mo. 500; Clark v. Cable, 21 Mo. 225. That one joint promisee can release, see *supra*, § 821. And a collusive receipt is inoperative. Barker v. Richardson, 1 Y. & J. 362; Hickey v. Burt, 7 Taunt. 48. ² Leake, 2d ed. 905; Innes v. Stephenson, 1 M. & Rob. 145. See Husband v. Davis, 10 C. B. 645. ³ *Supra*, §§ 526, 836; Leake, 2d ed. 914; M'Intyre v. Miller, 13 M. & W. 725; Lucas v. Wilkinson, 1 H. & N. 420. ⁴ Graves v. Key, 3 B. & Ad. 313; Phillips v. Warren, 14 M. & W. 379.

¹ Piercey v. Fynney, L. R. 12 Eq. 69; *supra*, § 946; *infra*, § 1028; see Rawstone v. Gandell, 15 M. & W. 304.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 836 *et seq.*

⁶ *Supra*, § 840.

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 842 *et seq.*

sented and dishonored;¹ but if the cheque is presented and dishonored, the creditor is left free to pursue his original claim.² The receipt of a cheque duly acknowledged is *prima facie* proof of payment.³ The holder of a cheque is bound to use due diligence in its collection; and if through his negligence the cheque is lost, or its presentment is so delayed that it is not paid, in consequence of the bank's failure, or for other reasons, the loss is imputable to him.⁴ A cheque should be presented, according to the English rule, within a day after its receipt, when payable at the same place. If payable at a distance, the time for trans-

Receipt of
cheque
prima
facie proof
of payment

¹ *Supra*, § 504; *infra*, § 1003; Leake, 2d ed. 898; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. §§ 710, 716, 731; Puckford v. Maxwell, 6 T. R. 52; Caine v. Coulton, 1 H. & C. 764; Charles v. Blackwell, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 151; Weddigen v. Elastic Co., 100 Mass. 422; Cromwell v. Lovett, 1 Hall, 56; People v. Baker, 20 Wend. 602; Sweet v. Titus, 67 Barb. 327; Blair v. Wilson, 28 Grat. 165.

² Everett v. Collins, 2 Camp. 515; Bridges v. Garrett, L. R. 5 C. P. 458; Hough v. May, 4 Ad. & El. 954; Small v. Mining Co., 99 Mass. 277; Hodgson v. Barrett, 33 Oh. St. 63; Phillips v. Bullard, 58 Ga. 256; Mordis v. Kennedy, 23 Kan. 408.

³ Carmarthen R. R. v. Manchester R. R., L. R. 8 C. P. 685. As to cheques of third parties see Guild v. Butler, 127 Mass. 386, cited *supra*, § 1003.

In a Massachusetts case, in 1880, the evidence was that D. in good faith borrowed money from a bank, whose officers believed him to be solvent, delivering as collateral a certificate of stock in a corporation. Upon the loan becoming due, D. paid the interest, and offered, in payment of the principal, a cheque on a third person with whom he had no funds, he being insolvent at the time, and with no reasons to expect that the cheque would be paid.

The bank accepted the cheque, and delivered to D. the collateral, and D.'s memorandum, marked "paid." On the same day, at a later hour, D. returned to the bank the certificate of stock, but not the memorandum. It was held that the loan was not paid, and that the bank was entitled to retain the certificate of stock as security for the loan. Holmes v. Fall River Bank, 126 Mass. 353. In London Bank v. Groom, L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 288, it was held that while cheques are primarily intended for speedy payment, there is no fixed rule of law that the holder of a "stale" cheque takes it at his peril, and so is affected with any equities attaching to the instrument, as is the case with overdue bills of exchange and promissory notes. It was, however, ruled that where an action is brought on a "stale" cheque, it is not enough for the holder to prove that he came by it *bona fide*, gave value for it, and had no notice of any equities attaching to it, but he must prove that he did not take the cheque under such circumstances as ought to have excited suspicion in the mind of a reasonable and prudent person.

⁴ Robinson v. Hawksford, 9 Q. B. 52; Merchant's Bank v. Spicer, 6 Wend. 443; Cromwell v. Lovett, 1 Hall, 56.

mission by post should be taken into account.¹ But a cheque need not, according to the prevalent view in this country, be presented on the day of its reception.² If the cheque be not presented within reasonable time, it operates as payment.³—Where a cheque, given to pay a debt due the drawee, was not presented at the bank for payment, but was lodged by the drawee in the hands of the drawer's clerk, this was held to be no payment.⁴—Where the cheque is not paid, the payee (there being no laches on his part) may fall back on the original cause of action.⁵ Nor need the cheque be presented, if the drawer had no funds, and the cheque would have been dishonored.⁶ In a case in Michigan, in 1880, the evidence was that D., being indebted to C., gave him an order on T. in payment. The order was held by C. for three days, after which time, on being presented for payment to T., payment was refused; and ten days afterwards T. became insolvent. Notice was not given of non-payment until four days after refusal. It was held that C. might recover the original debt from D., there having been under the circumstances no unreasonable delay on C.'s part in realizing the draft, and no proof of any injury to D.⁷ The case, it should be remembered, occurred in a country district, not subject to any prevalent mercantile custom requiring immediate presentation.—Where part payment of purchase money was made by a post-dated cheque, and before the date of payment the purchasers had notice that the vendor was adjudicated bankrupt, but they did not stop payment of the cheque, it was held that they would have to pay the money over again to the trustee.⁸

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 879; *Boddington v. Schlencker*, 4 B. & Ad. 752; *Alexander v. Burchfield*, 7 M. & G. 1061; *Prideaux v. Criddle*, L. R. 4 Q. B. 455.

² *Foster v. Paulk*, 41 Me. 425; *Merchant's Bank v. Spicer*, 6 Wend. 443; *Gough v. Staats*, 13 Wend. 549.

³ *Byles on Bills*, 9th ed. 19; *Hopkins v. Ware*, L. R. 4 Ex. 268; *Smith v. Miller*, 43 N. Y. 171.

⁴ *Dennie v. Hart*, 2 Pick. 204.

⁵ *Cromwell v. Lovett*, 1 Hall, 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Cushing v. Gore*, 15 Mass. 74; *Eichelberger v. Finley*, 7 Har. & J. 38, and other cases cited 2 Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 1106, and see *supra*, § 606.

⁷ *Briggs v. Parsons*, 39 Mich. 400.

⁸ *Armstead ex parte*, 45 L. T. N. S. 557.

§ 954. It is competent for the parties to agree that a negotiable security given by the debtor to the creditor should be held by the creditor merely as collateral security.¹ It has been held, also, that a note payable on demand, as long as it remains in the creditor's hands, is to be regarded only as a collateral security, until it is proved that it was taken in satisfaction.²

Negotiable security may be taken as a mere collateral.

¹ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 737; *Pring v. Clarkson*, 1 B. & C. 14; *Peacock v. Pursell*, 14 C. B. N. S. 728; *Welch v. Allington*, 23 Cal. 322; *Brown v. Olmsted*, 50 Cal. 162. As to extinction of old debt by merger, see *supra*, § 860.

² Leake, 2d ed. 892; citing *Fearn v. Cochrane*, 4 C. B. 274.

Whether a negotiable security was given in satisfaction of a debt or only as collateral security depends upon the construction of the agreement between the parties. Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 729. "The debt may be considered as actually paid, if the creditor, at the time of receiving the note, has agreed to take it in payment of the debt, and to take upon himself the risk of the note being paid, or if, from the conduct of the creditor or the special circumstances of the case, such an agreement is legally to be implied. But, in the absence of any special circumstances throwing the risk of the note upon the creditor, his receiving the note in lieu of present payment of the debt is no more than giving an extended credit, or giving time for payment on a future day, in consideration of receiving this species of security. Whilst the time runs payment cannot legally be enforced, but the debt continues till payment is actually made; and, if payment be not made when the time has run out, payment of the debt may be enforced as if the note had not been given." Langdale, M. R., in *Sayer v. Wagstaff*, 5 Beav. 423; and

see *Maillard v. Argyle*, 6 M. & G. 40, *Bottomley v. Nuttall*, 5 C. B. N. S. 122, to same effect. See further *infra*, § 956.

In Maine, "the acceptance of negotiable paper for a debt, and giving a receipt in discharge thereof, are an extinguishment of the original liability, unless the parties did not so intend." *Crosby v. Redman*, 70 Me. 56; *Mehan v. Thompson*, 71 Me. 501.

In Massachusetts, the rule "that a negotiable promissory note, given for a simple contract debt, shall be deemed a payment, is to be taken with considerable qualification. . . . This is a presumption of fact, which may be rebutted by evidence that it was not so intended; and the fact that such a presumption would deprive the party who takes the note of a substantial benefit has a strong tendency to show that it was not so intended." *Curtis v. Hubbard*, 9 Met. 328. "It is well settled in this commonwealth that the law will presume that the giving of a promissory note for a simple contract debt is payment of the debt; but this is not a conclusive presumption, but may be rebutted and controlled by proof. And in many cases it has been decided that if the debt is a note secured by mortgage, the renewal of the note, or the substitution of another note therefor, is not necessarily to be presumed a payment, so as to discharge the mortgage." Endicott, J., *Dodge v. Emerson*, 131 Mass. 467; citing *Taft v. Boyd*, 13 Allen, 84, and

When the paper is held merely as collateral security, the vendor's duty "is the same as if the bill had been given in con-

cases there cited. See *Melledge v. Boston Iron Co.*, 5 Cush. 158; *Curtis v. Hubbard*, 9 Metc. 327; *Parham Sewing Machine Co. v. Brock*, 113 Mass. 194. There is no presumption of payment where the note given is that of an agent to an undisclosed principal. *Lovell v. Williams*, 125 Mass. 439; and see *infra*, § 956.

The rule in New Jersey and New York, differing widely from the above, is thus stated by Van Fleet, V.-C., in *Wildrick v. Swain*, 34 N. J. Eq. 170: "The proposition is quite elementary that the acceptance of the promissory note of a debtor, for a precedent debt, will not operate as a discharge or satisfaction of the debt, unless it is agreed that such shall be its effect. In *Schanck v. Arrowsmith*, 1 Stock. 323, Chancellor Williamson declared that the principle was firmly established that the taking of an additional or other security, of inferior or equal degree, would not *ipso facto* discharge a lien which attached by reason of an original security. He further said: 'If the original security is actually cancelled, or the lien created by it formally released, of course no resort can be had to it. It is always a question of intention, sometimes to be ascertained by the legal construction of written instruments, and sometimes by the circumstances of the case.' The New York adjudications go one step further in protecting the right of the creditor to his original cause of action. It is there held that the acceptance by a creditor of a new promise from his debtor to pay a preëxisting debt affords no defence whatever to a suit on the original cause of action, even if the creditor expressly agrees that the new promise shall operate as

a satisfaction of the old. And the reason assigned for refusing to give legal efficacy to the promise of the creditor is, that it has no consideration to support it, being a mere *nudum pactum*. *Frisbie v. Larned*, 21 Wend. 452; *Cole v. Sackett*, 1 Hill, 516; *Waydell v. Luer*, 5 ib. 448; S. C. on error, 3 Den. 410; *Rice v. Dewey*, 54 Barb. 455." And see *Putnam v. Lewis*, 8 Johns. 389; *Conkling v. King*, 10 Barb. 372; and discussion in Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 620 *et seq.*

In Pennsylvania the rule was thus stated in 1881, by Mercur, J. (*Hunter v. Moul*, 12 Rep. 605): "The mere acceptance from a debtor of his own note, or the note of a third person, in case of an antecedent indebtedness, is not a payment of the indebtedness. In the absence of a special agreement, it must be considered as a conditional payment, or as collateral security. The debtor continues liable for his own debt in the event of a failure of payment of the note thus given or transferred. *Leas v. James*, 10 S. & R. 307; *M'Ginn v. Holmes*, 2 Watts, 121; *Weakly v. Bell*, 9 ib. 273; *McIntyre v. Kennedy*, 5 Casey, 448; *Brown v. Scott*, 1 P. F. S. 357; *League v. Waring & Co.*, 4 Norris, 244.

"When the transfer of a note is a conditional payment, it is necessary to inquire what the true condition was, and, if not fulfilled by the person accepting it, what injury, if any, has resulted from the breach. The cases are not in harmony as to the effect of a failure to present the note of a third person and give notice of its dishonor, when no injury therefrom has resulted to the debtor. We shall not attempt to review them. Great regard must be had to the character of the transaction.

ditional payment; and if he neglect to present, or to give notice of dishonor to the buyer, the buyer will be discharged from liability on the bill, and the laches will operate so as to constitute the bill absolute payment for its amount."¹ But, as we will see more fully, if a debtor's own immature note is taken on account of a debt, the ordinary inference is that the debt is not extinguished, but only suspended until the maturity of the note, when the creditor may elect to revert to the original debt. The note is not to be regarded as payment,

If the debtor indorse the note, a more stringent rule prevails as to notice than if he transferred it by delivery only. When the guaranty is absolute that a specific act shall be done by another, it was said in *Vinal v. Richardson*, 13 Allen, 521, demand and notice need not be averred, although the want of them may be a defence on the ground of negligence to the extent of the resulting injury. One who has merely guarantied it, but whose name is not on the bill or note, is not in general entitled to notice of non-payments. *Chitty on Bills*, 498. If the bill or note be given as collateral security, and the party delivering it were no party to it, either by indorsing or transferring by delivery when payable to bearer, but merely caused it to be drawn, indorsed, or delivered by a third party as security, or has merely guarantied the payment, it has been considered that he is not, within the custom of merchants, a party to it so as to be entitled to strict regular notice, nor discharged from his liabilities, by the neglect of the holder to give him such notice, unless he can show by express evidence, or by inference, that he has sustained loss by omission. *Ibid.* 441.

"The guarantor of a note does not stand in the same situation as parties to it. His obligation is in the nature of an insurance of the debt, and there is no need of the same proof to charge

him as if he were an indorser. The necessity of demand in order to charge the indorser is solely grounded on the custom of merchants, and applies only to actions against the indorser or the bill itself. It does not apply when the guarantor is not an indorser. *Gibbs v. Cannon*, 9 S. & R. 199; *Overton v. Tracey*, 14 ib. 311; *M'Lughan v. Boward*, 4 Watts, 308. The law is clearly stated in 2 *Parsons on Notes and Bills*, 184, where it is said if paper be transferred by delivery only as security for a pre-existing debt, and it is dishonored while in the hands of the transferee, it affects in no way the debt it was intended to secure. Upon dishonor of the paper it is not necessary to give him notice thereof as an indorser, but the debtor may show in defence any injury he has sustained by the actual laches of the creditor. Nor does the fact that the collaterals were exchanged for other securities, which were ultimately found worthless, change the liability, unless it is further shown that a loss resulted to the owner of the collaterals by reason of such exchange. *Girard Ins. Co. v. Marr*, 10 Wr. 504." As to rule where negotiable paper is taken in payment of goods, see *infra*, § 956.

¹ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 737, citing *Peacock v. Pursell*, 14 C. B. N. S. 728; *Hazard v. Wells*, 2 Abb. N. C. 444.

unless by agreement of the parties it comes in by way of novation as a substitute for the old debt.¹ And *a fortiori*, a promissory note not payable at a bank and not governed by law merchant will not operate as payment, in absence of agreement to that effect.²

§ 955. When goods are, by the agreement of sale, to be paid for by the buyer's note or acceptances, or like forms of credit, the inference is that the payment is only conditional, and that, upon dishonor of the paper, the seller may sue for the price of the goods.³ On the other hand,

Question
one of in-
ference
from facts.

¹ *Peter v. Beverly*, 10 Pet. 532; *Kemmil v. Wilson*, 4 Wash. C. C. 808; *Wallace v. Agry*, 4 Mason, 336; *Bangor v. Warren*, 34 Me. 324; *Ripley v. Greenleaf*, 2 Vt. 129; *Reed v. Upton*, 10 Pick. 525; *Ilseley v. Jewett*, 2 Met. (Mass.) 168; *Hughes v. Wheeler*, 8 Cow. 77; *Frisbie v. Larned*, 21 Wend. 450; *Waydell v. Luer*, 5 Hill, 448; *Bank of Penna. v. Potius*, 10 Watts, 148; *Lord v. Ocean Bank*, 20 Penn. St. 384; *Swope v. Leffingwell*, 72 Mo. 348; *Graves v. Shulman*, 59 Ala. 406. And see as generally sustaining the text, *Peter v. Beverly*, 10 Pet. 532; *Wallace v. Agry*, 4 Mason, 336; *Bell v. Porter*, 9 Conn. 23; *Burdick v. Green*, 15 Johns. 247; *Vansteenburg v. Hoffman*, 15 Barb. 28; *Keen v. Dufresne*, 3 S. & R. 233; *Geiser v. Kershner*, 4 Gill & J. 305; *Prescott v. Hubbell*, 1 McC. 94; *Barelli v. Brown*, 1 McC. 449; *Minis v. McDowell*, 4 Ga. 182.

² *Hill v. Sleeper*, 58 Ind. 221; *Bristol Milling Co. v. Probaser*, 64 Ind. 406; *Linderman v. Rosenfield*, 67 Ind. 246; *Jeffries v. Lamb*, 73 Ind. 202.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 894; *Paul v. Dod*, 2 C. B. 800; *Helps v. Winterbottom*, 2 B. & Ad. 431; *Gunn v. Bolckow*, L. R. 10 Ch. 500; *Mayer v. Nyas*, 1 Bing. 311; *Harris v. Johnston*, 3 Cranch, 311; *Brigham v. Lally*, 130 Mass. 485. See *Herring v. Sanger*, 3 John. Cas. 71; *Tyson v. Pollock*, 1 Pen. & W. 375;

Little v. Sewing Machine Co., 67 Ind. 67; *Hoeflinger v. Wells*, 47 Wis. 628.

In *Swain v. Frazier*, N. J. Ct. of Errors, 1882 (14 Rep. 277), *Magie, J.*, on delivering the opinion of the court, said: "The vice-chancellor further held that the acceptance of the promissory note of a debtor for his pre-existing debt will not operate as a discharge or satisfaction of the debt, unless the creditor agrees that such shall be its effect. The question involved in this proposition, though much discussed elsewhere, is now for the first time, so far as I can ascertain, presented for the consideration of this court. The question is not a new one in the courts of this state. In 1853 Chancellor Williamson held that, whether a note given for a legacy, charged upon land of the maker, was to operate in payment of the legacy or not, was a question of the intention of the parties to the transaction. *Schanck v. Arrowsmith*, 1 Stock. 314. In *Shipman v. Cook*, 1 C. E. Green, 251, Chancellor Green seems to admit the same rule as unquestionable. In *Freeholders v. Thomas*, 5 C. E. Green, 39, Chancellor Zabriskie said that it was well settled that a note, either of the debtor or a third person, received for a debt, is not payment, if not itself paid, except in cases where it is positively agreed to be received in payment. The same principle was ap-

if the creditor have offered to him the choice between cash and negotiable paper, and takes the negotiable paper, this will be regarded as satisfaction.¹ The question to be determined on all the circumstances of the case is, whether the paper was taken in payment, or merely as security.² If the creditor gives a receipt in full, the inference of satisfaction will be strong,³ though this may be explained by extrinsic proof.⁴ The question as to the intention of the parties is for the jury.⁵—If the note of a third party is accepted in payment of goods, the inference is that the note was received in full satisfaction for the goods,⁶ supposing the note be genuine and there be no fraudulent concealment.⁷ But unless the note was taken in satisfaction, it does not discharge a pre-existing debt.⁸

plied by Vice-Chancellor Van Fleet in *Hutchinson v. Swartaweller*, 4 Stew. Eq. 205. Under such circumstances it would be questionable whether, if there were doubts respecting the rule, it would be wise at this day to attempt to modify or reverse it. But the rule is sustained by the great weight of authority in England and in this country. Mr. Addison so states the rule to be established in his work on Contracts, and the English cases may be found collected in the notes to § 333 of Morgan's edition. The American cases are collected in the note to 2 Parsons on Contr. *624, *681, and in the notes to *Tobey v. Barber*, 2 Am. L. C. 5th ed. 245, and to *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Smith L. C. 7th Am. ed. 595. Later cases will be found in Bigelow on Bills and Notes, 499. According to the nearly unanimous doctrine of these cases, a creditor may agree to accept a new promise of the debtor in satisfaction of a pre-existing debt. The rule applied by the vice-chancellor seems to be entirely satisfactory."

¹ *Marsh v. Pedder*, 4 Camp. 257; *Smith v. Ferrand*, 7 B. & C. 19; *Anderson v. Hillies*, 12 C. B. 499. See Bab-

cock *v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *McClure v. Andrews*, 68 Ind. 97; *infra*, § 957.

² *Robinson v. Read*, 9 B. & C. 449; *Sard v. Rhodes*, 1 M. & W. 153; *Wiseman v. Lyman*, 7 Mass. 286; *Perit v. Pitfield*, 5 Rawle, 166; *Glenn v. Smith*, 2 Gill & J. 494. See *supra*, §§ 954 *et seq.*

³ *Ibid.*; *Wheeler v. Schroeder*, 4 R. I. 383.

⁴ *Feamster v. Withrow*, 12 W. Va. 611.

⁵ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 729; *Goldshede v. Cottrell*, 2 M. & W. 20; *Lyman v. Bank*, 12 How. U. S. 225; *Johnson v. Cleaves*, 15 N. H. 332; *Coburn v. Odell*, 30 N. H. 540; *Vail v. Foster*, 4 Comst. 312; *Cake v. Bank*, 86 Penn. St. 303; *Gordon v. Price*, 10 Ired. 385; *Moore v. Briggs*, 15 Ala. 24; *Fulfud v. Johnson*, 15 Ala. 386; *Steamboat Charlotte v. Hammond*, 9 Mo. 59.

⁶ *Whitbeck v. Van Ness*, 11 Johns. 409. As to merger, see *supra*, §§ 684, 860; *infra*, §§ 1001, 1040.

⁷ *Markle v. Hatfield*, 2 Johns. 455; *Willson v. Foree*, 6 Johns. 110. The earlier American cases will be found discussed in detail in Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 614 *et seq.*

⁸ *Ibid.*; *Wildrick v. Swain*, 34 N. J.

Whether one note accepted in exchange for another is a payment of the original note or merely a collateral, depends, also, upon the intention of the parties as evidenced by the facts of the particular case.¹

§ 956. The accepting of negotiable paper as yet immature, suspends a debt on account of which it is given; though in case of its dishonor at maturity, the debt is revived in full force.² Until the security is matured and paid, the debt remains in abeyance;³ when the security is paid this extinguishes the debt, either in full, if the security is for the amount of

Acceptance of immature negotiable paper on account suspends debt and operates as conditional payment.

Eq. 170; *Walsh v. Lennon*, 98 Ill. 27; *Krutsinger v. Brown*, 72 Ind. 466. See *supra*, § 860, as to discharge of pre-existing debt; and as to accord and satisfaction, see *infra*, § 1001.

In *Lord v. Bigelow*, 124 Mass. 185, the plaintiff received two promissory notes under the understanding that he would release a debt due him from the defendant should they be paid at maturity. He procured the discounting of one of these notes, taking it up when protested for non-payment, and the other he pressed to judgment in a friend's name, but received nothing on either. It was held that on tendering the first note and an assignment of the judgment on the other, he was entitled to recover on the debt.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; *Cadiz Bank v. Slemmons*, 34 Oh. St. 142; *Robertson v. Bank*, 41 Mich. 356; and see fully *infra*, § 1001.

In *McKee v. Hamilton*, 33 Oh. St. 7, a note in renewal of a partnership debt was given by one partner only, with the same sureties, however, as the original debt. The sureties signed the renewal on the faith of representations that this was necessary for the business of the firm, and on the promise by the partner signing that his co-partner would also sign as principal. It was held that as against such sure-

ties this did not operate to extinguish the original debt; and that the sureties, on paying the renewal note, might recover from the partners.

² *Leake*, 2d ed. 891; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 729; *Stedman v. Gooch*, 1 Esp. 4; *Kearslake v. Morgan*, 5 T. R. 513; *Baker v. Walker*, 14 M. & W. 465; *Belshaw v. Bush*, 11 C. B. 191; *Currie v. Misa*, L. R. 10 Ex. 163; *Worthington ex parte*, L. R. 3 C. D. 803; *Peter v. Beverly*, 10 Pet. 532; *Elliott v. Sleeper*, 2 N. H. 525; *Chamberlin v. Perkins*, 55 N. H. 237; *Seymour v. Darrow*, 31 Vt. 122; *Bill v. Porter*, 9 Conn. 23; *Ilseley v. Jewett*, 2 Met. (Mass.) 168; *Van Ostrand v. Reed*, 1 Wend. 424; *Geller v. Seixas*, 4 Abb. Pr. 103; *Cole v. Sackett*, 1 Hill, 516; *Hill v. Beebe*, 13 N. Y. 556; *Jagger Iron Co. v. Walker*, 76 N. Y. 521; *Hays v. McClurg*, 4 Watts, 452; *Weekly v. Bell*, 9 Watts, 273; *Thayer v. Peck*, 93 Ill. 357; *Smith v. Bettger*, 68 Ind. 254; *Briggs v. Parsons*, 39 Mich. 400; *Hughes v. Israel*, 73 Mo. 538; *Griffith v. Grogan*, 12 Cal. 321; *Brown v. Olmstead*, 50 Cal. 162. As to merger of old debt in new, see *supra*, §§ 684, 860; *infra*, §§ 957, 1040.

³ *Sayer v. Wagstaff*, 5 Beav. 415; *Okie v. Spencer*, 2 Whart. 253; *Proctor v. Mather*, 3 B. Mon. 353.

the debt,¹ or *pro tanto*, when it only covers a part of the debt.² In several jurisdictions in this country, negotiable paper taken for the price of goods is regarded as unconditional payment, this, however, open to rebuttal by proof of a different understanding.³—The payment of the security relates back as to time to the giving the receipt, the payment dating from that period.⁴

§ 957. A negotiable security may be accepted in discharge of a debt, when such is the understanding of the parties, in

¹ Thorne v. Smith, 10 C. B. 659.

² Bottomley v. Nuttall, 5 C. B. N. S. 122. Mr. Benjamin (Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 730) says: "The authorities in support of the rule that in the absence of stipulation to the contrary, the negotiable security is only considered to be a conditional payment, defeasible on the dishonor of the security, need not be reviewed, as there is no conflict on the point." To this, he cites among other cases, Owenson v. Morse, 7 T. R. 64; Puckford v. Maxwell, 6 T. R. 52; Griffiths v. Owen, 13 M. & W. 58; James v. Williams, 13 M. & W. 828; Belshaw v. Bush, 11 C. B. 191; Ford v. Beech, 11 Q. B. 873; Plimley v. Westley, 2 Bing. N. C. 249; Valpy v. Oakley, 16 Q. B. 941. The American editor cites to the same effect, Middlesex v. Thomas, 5 C. E. Green, 39; Archibald v. Argall, 53 Ill. 307; Guion v. Doherty, 43 Miss. 538; Syracuse R. R. v. Collins, 3 Lansing, 29; Burkhalter v. Bank, 42 N. Y. 538; May v. Gamble, 14 Fla. 467. As to novation in such cases, see *supra*, § 856. That a payment of a pre-existing debt by draft of third party is conditional, see League v. Waring, 85 Penn. St. 244.

³ See Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 752, and note a; citing, among other cases, Wallace v. Agry, 4 Mason, 336; Clap in re, 2 Low. 226; Kimball v. Ship Anna Kimball, 2 Cliff. 4; Hudson

v. Bradley, 2 Cliff. 130; Paine v. Dwinel, 53 Me. 52; Ward v. Bourne, 56 Me. 161; Hutchins v. Olcott, 4 Vt. 549; Wait v. Brewster, 31 Vt. 516; Watkins v. Hill, 8 Pick. 522; Reed v. Upton, 10 Pick. 525; Wood v. Bodwell, 12 Pick. 268; Melledge v. Iron Co., 5 Cush. 158; Thurston v. Blanchard, 22 Pick. 18; Camp v. Gullett, 2 Eng. (Ark.) 524; Costar v. Davies, 3 Eng. (Ark.) 213; and see cases *supra*, § 954. In Clap in re, Lowell, J., said: "The difference between the law of Massachusetts and that of England, and most of the states of the Union, I understand to be merely this; that in the courts of this state a negotiable bill or note is taken to be a more beneficial security than a book account, or any debt of that kind; and though it does not operate as a merger in law, is presumed *prima facie* to be taken as payment. But it is a mere question of fact, and any evidence which rebuts the presumption is competent and it is easily overcome." To the same effect, see Morrison v. Smith, 81 Ill. 221; Kappes v. Lumber Co., 1 Ill. App. 280; Frazer v. Boss, 66 Ind. 1; Mehlberg v. Fisher, 24 Wis. 607. As to the distinctive rule in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, see *supra*, § 954.

⁴ Belshaw v. Bush, 11 C. B. 191; Turney v. Dodwell, 3 E. & B. 136.

which case the dishonor of the security does not revive the debt.¹ If the buyer offers to pay cash, and the vendor takes a negotiable security in preference, the security is taken as an absolute payment.² Hence, a plea that a bill or note was given in full satisfaction and discharge has been held good on demurrer, and the replication that it was not paid when due has been held bad.³ And as elsewhere stated, a negotiable security for a fractional amount of a debt may be received in satisfaction of the debt when such is the intention of the parties, the creditor thinking (rightly or erroneously) that a higher security for a less sum is better than a lower security for a greater sum.⁴ When negotiable paper is thus taken in satisfaction, a vendor cannot fall back on the original consideration.⁵ When a prior debt secured by a note is thus satisfied, the note is extinguished.⁶

§ 958. When a debtor gives on account of his debt negotiable paper on which he is liable as drawer or endorser, the acceptance of this paper is *prima facie* an answer to a suit for the debt; and the creditor is bound in reply to account for the bill. If by his negligence the party primarily bound is freed from liability, this discharges the debtor, not only from his secondary liability on the paper, but from his liability on the original contract.⁷ Where the creditor takes

Negotiable paper may be accepted in satisfaction of a debt.

Negotiable paper taken in payment may bar suit when holder by negligence releases paper.

¹ *Supra*, § 860; *infra*, § 1001; Leake, 2d ed. 891; Lichfield v. Green, 1 H. & N. 884; Lewis v. Lyster, 2 C. M. R. 704; see Meyer v. Lathrop, 73 N. Y. 315; Cake v. Bank, 86 Penn. St. 303.

² Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 731; Strong v. Hart, 6 B. & C. 160; Robinson v. Read, 9 B. & C. 449; Anderson v. Hillies, 12 C. B. 499; Cowasjee v. Thompson, 5 Moore P. C. 165; *supra*, § 956.

³ Sibree v. Tripp, 15 M. & W. 23; see fully as to accord and satisfaction, *infra*, §§ 996 *et seq.*

⁴ See *supra*, § 504; *infra*, §§ 1000-1.

⁵ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 732;

Sibree v. Tripp, 15 M. & W. 23. As to novation in such cases, see *supra*, § 856. As to merger of old debt, *supra*, §§ 684, 860; *infra*, §§ 959, 1040.

⁶ Bantz v. Basnett, 12 W. Va. 772; *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.* That a partnership debt may be extinguished by taking negotiable paper from one partner, see *supra*, § 862.

⁷ Price v. Price, 16 M. & W. 232; Camidge v. Allenby, 6 B. & C. 373. By statute 3 and 4 Anne, a bill of exchange taken in satisfaction of a debt amounts to payment when the holder does not "take his due course to obtain payment." See Peacock v.

paper on which the debtor is primarily liable, the debtor must show, if he set up the paper in bar to an action for the original debt, either that the paper is still due, or that if overdue it has been paid or endorsed away to other parties so as to keep afloat the liability of the debtor.¹ When, also, the debtor pays to his creditor negotiable paper to which he is not a party, and on which his name does not appear, this is to be regarded as payment unless it be shown that due steps were taken to collect the paper, but that these steps failed.² If there be laches in pursuit of the bill, so that the liability of the parties is discharged, this, if imputable to the creditor, discharges the debt.³

§ 959. Before a vendor can repudiate a negotiable security and bring suit on the price, he must account for the security; since otherwise it may turn up in the hands of third parties, and the purchaser be compelled to pay twice.⁴ If negotiable paper is passed by the

If passed to others, or lost, or altered, this may bar remedy.

Purcell, 14 C. B. N. S. 728; *Smith v. Miller*, 43 N. Y. 171; *Auburn Bank v. Hunsicker*, 72 N. Y. 252; *Thompson v. Cooper*, 57 Ala. 560.

¹ *Price v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 232; *National Bank v. Tranch*, L. R. 2 C. P. 556.

² *Camidge v. Allenby*, 6 B. & C. 373; *Rogers v. Langford*, 1 C. & M. 637; *Robson v. Oliver*, 10 Q. B. 704; *Smith v. Mercer*, L. R. 3 Ex. 51; see *Price v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 232.

³ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 735; *Swinyard v. Bowes*, 5 M. & S. 62; *Gallagher v. Roberts*, 2 Wash. C. C. 191; *Clark v. Young*, 1 Cranch, 181; *Swett v. Southworth*, 125 Mass. 417; *Ormsby v. Fortune*, 16 S. & R. 302; *M'Lughan v. Bovard*, 4 Watts, 308; *Mehlberg v. Tisher*, 24 Wis. 607; *Taylor v. Daniel*, 9 B. Mon. 53; *Thomason v. Cooper*, 57 Ala. 560.

In *Smith v. Mercer*, L. R. 3 Ex. 51, the purchaser gave a bill drawn on Feb. 20th by B.'s Bank of Liverpool or London, but though the vendor put it in circulation, it was not presented in

London until April 23d, when it was dishonored, B.'s bank having failed on April 19th. No notice of dishonor was given to the purchaser. It was held that he was discharged, the court ruling that the vendor either took the bill as cash, in which case there was no further liability, or as a negotiable security, in which case the purchaser could not be put in a worse position than he would have been had he endorsed the bill. It will be observed that this was the case of a country bank note, which it is not the practice to present at maturity. And in England it is held that there is no laches in the mere failure to present country bank notes for payment at the bankers on finding they have failed, if the notes are returned to the purchaser within a reasonable time. *Robson v. Oliver*, 10 Q. B. 704; *Rogers v. Langford*, 1 C. & M. 637.

⁴ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 733; *Price v. Price*, 16 M. & W. 232; *Bunney v. Poyntz*, 4 B. & Ad. 568; *Swett v. Southworth*, 125 Mass. 417.

vendor to third parties, it is a bar to his recovery of the debt.¹ Nor can the vendor recover the price of goods for which he has taken negotiable paper which he has lost,² nor when he has so altered a bill as to vitiate it and preclude the purchaser from using it against antecedent parties;³ though it is otherwise when the purchaser is the party primarily liable on the bill.⁴

§ 960. A payment made by means of a void security may be repudiated by the creditor without taking any steps to pursue the parties liable on the face of the paper.⁵ “If the securities thus passed were forged or counterfeited; or if not what on their face they purport to be, as if they appeared to be foreign bills needing no stamp, but were really domestic bills invalid for want of a stamp, the vendor would be entitled to rescind the sale for failure of consideration.”⁶ Hence a payment in forged notes is a nullity.⁷ “A forged note delivered in payment does not operate as a satisfaction or extinguishment of an antecedent debt or demand.”⁸ And the purchaser who knowingly palms off a worthless security (though genuine) on a vendor, is liable for a fraud, and the vendor may rescind the sale and bring trover for the goods;⁹ or he may recover back the money paid on such worthless security.¹⁰ Where, also, both parties are ignorant

¹ See *Belshaw v. Bush*, 11 C. B. 191; and criticism of *Miles v. Golton*, 2 C. & M. 504, in *Smith's Mercantile Law*, 539; *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 736.

² *Crowe v. Clay*, 9 Ex. 604. That the original bill must be produced, see *Ramuz v. Crowe*, 1 Ex. 167.

³ *Alderson v. Langdale*, 8 B. & Ad. 661.

⁴ *Atkinson v. Handon*, 2 Ad. & E. 628.

⁵ *Cundy v. Marriott*, 1 B. & Ad. 696; *Cabot Bank v. Morton*, 4 Gray, 156; *Markle v. Hatfield*, 2 Johns. 455; *Mudd v. Reaves*, 2 Har. & J. 368; *Simms v. Clark*, 11 Ill. 137; *Hargrave v. Dusenbury*, 2 Hawks, 326. That money paid on void security may be recovered back, see *supra*, § 744.

⁶ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 739;

2 Ch. Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1106; *Goodrich v. Tracy*, 43 Vt. 314.

⁷ *Young v. Adams*, 6 Mass. 182; *Gloucester Bk. v. Salem Bk.*, 17 Mass. 33; *Thomas v. Todd*, 6 Hill, N. Y. 340; *Ramsdale v. Horton*, 3 Barr, 330; *Keene v. Thompson*, 4 Gill & J. 463.

⁸ *Boynton, C. J.*, *Emerine v. O'Brien*, 36 Oh. St. 496; citing *Goodrich v. Tracy*, 43 Vt. 314; *Eagle Bk. v. Smith*, 5 Conn. 71; *Markle v. Hatfield*, 2 Johns. 455; *Ritter v. Singmester*, 73 Penn. St. 400; 2 *Dan. Neg. Inst.* § 1274.

⁹ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 739; *Read v. Hutchinson*, 3 Camp. 352; *Hawse v. Crowe*, R. & Mood. 414; *Camidge v. Allenby*, 6 B. & C. 373; *Stewart v. Emerson*, 52 N. H. 301.

¹⁰ *Supra*, § 744.

of the insolvency of the maker of a promissory note paid by one to the other, the party taking the note is entitled to recover the amount of the original debt from the party from whom the note was taken.¹—The fact that the parties paying and receiving were ignorant that a bank which has issued notes received in payment failed prior to the reception, does not vary the case. The loss falls on the party paying and not on the party receiving.²

VI. PAYMENT IN BANK NOTES.

§ 961. As is elsewhere noticed, a payment in bank notes is valid when a legal tender.³ When bank notes are not a legal tender, they will nevertheless constitute, if not objected to, payment; though the creditor may demand currency.⁴—When money is sent by post, at the creditor's request, to an address given by him, or if such mode of transmission is the practice between the parties, and the money is lost, this is an adequate payment.⁵ But the letter must be rightly addressed.⁶

Payment in bank notes valid when a legal tender.

VII. PAYMENT BY LETTER.

§ 962. When a creditor designates the post as the way in which payment is to be made to him, and his directions are followed, then the post-office is to be regarded as the agent of the creditor, and he takes the risk.⁷ The posting of a letter, properly addressed and stamped, to a person known to be doing

Payment by letter sufficient when in accordance with instructions.

¹ *Roberts v. Fisher*, 43 N. Y. 159; *supra*, § 744. Where money, which is stolen from a creditor by a debtor, is delivered to the creditor, who accepts it in payment of the debt, this is no payment. *State Bank v. Welles*, 3 Pick. 394.

² *Frontier Bank v. Morse*, 22 Me. 88; *Fogg v. Sawyer*, 9 N. H. 365; *Gilman v. Peck*, 11 Vt. 516; *Wainwright v. Webster*, 11 Vt. 576; *Com. v. Stone*, 4 Met. 43; *Magee v. Carmack*, 13 Ill. 289; see, however, *contra*, *Lowrey v. Murrell*, 2 Port. 280.

³ *Infra*, § 984.

⁴ *Ibid.* That an agent is bound to receive only currency, see *supra*, § 943, and so of an attorney, *supra*, § 944. The question of void or forged notes has been already noticed, *supra*, § 960.

⁵ *Kington v. Kington*, 11 M. & W. 233; *Warwicke v. Noakes, Peake*, 67; *Wakefield v. Lithgow*, 3 Mass. 249.

⁶ *Gorden v. Strange*, 1 Ex. 477; and see cases in next section.

⁷ *Warwicke v. Noakes, Peake*, 67; *Skelbeck v. Garbett*, 7 Q. B. 846; *New Haven Bk. v. Mitchell*, 15 Conn. 206; *Shoemaker v. Bank*, 59 Penn. St. 79; and cases cited in last section. As to posting acceptance, see *supra*, § 18.

business in a place where there is a regular delivery of letters, is *prima facie* proof of the reception of the letter by the person to whom it is addressed.¹ The letter, however, must be correctly and specifically directed,² and when particular instructions have been given by the creditor, these should be followed.³

VIII. PAYMENT IN GOODS AND SET-OFF.

§ 963. When it is agreed between debtor and creditor that certain goods are to be taken in satisfaction of a debt, the delivery and acceptance of the goods will be regarded as a payment, either in full or *pro tanto*, as the case may be.⁴ The exchange of goods for goods is a barter; and so is an exchange of goods for labor; “and barter, so far as concerns the remedy, is distinguishable from sale, in that in barter the declaration must be special.”⁵ “In both cases,” however, “the title to the property is absolutely transferred, and the same rules of law are applicable to the transaction, whether the consideration of the contract is money or by way of barter.”⁶ Whether the giving or receiving of goods is a payment, is a question of fact. It may happen that it may be a matter of doubt whether the goods were received as payment, or as items in a line of business transactions, so as to constitute simply a set-off. As to this, the intention of the parties, as evidenced by their words and dealings, must determine.⁷

Payment in goods may by agreement be equivalent to payment in money.

¹ Wh. on Ev. § 1323, and cases 409; *Edwards v. Cottroll*, 43 Iowa, 194.

² *Gordon v. Strange*, 1 Exch. 477; *Barbe v. Parker*, 1 H. Bl. 287; *Walter v. Haynes*, Ry. & M. 149; *Harrison v. Luke*, 14 M. & W. 139; *Allen v. Blunt*, 2 Wood. & M. 121. *Guerreiro v. Peile*, 3 B. & Ald. 616;

³ *Wakefield v. Lithgow*, 3 Mass. 249; *Mitchell v. Gile*, 12 N. H. 390; *Vail v. Strong*, 10 Vt. 457. see *Phillips v. Scott*, 43 Mo. 86; and cases cited to § 961.

⁴ *Leake*, 2d ed. 889; *Hands v. Burton*, 9 East, 349; *Saxty v. Wilkin*, 11 M. & W. 622; *Williamson v. Berry*, 8 How. U. S. 544; *Costello v. Cady*, 102 Mass. 140; *Stevenson v. State*, 65 Ind.

⁵ *Bigelow, J., Com. v. Clark*, 14 Gray, 372.

⁷ *Strong v. Kennedy*, 40 Mich. 327; see *Bacon v. Lamb*, 4 Col. 578. As to set-off, see *infra*, § 1009.

§ 964. It may be part of the understanding of parties dealing with each other, that the cash indebtedness of the one to the other shall be limited to the balance, after subtracting from the account debts admitted on both sides. If so, the set-off is equivalent to a payment, and may be so pleaded.¹ The courts will give such effect to agreements of this class, if executed in good faith, as is calculated to promote the best interests of all parties.² "The way in which an agreement to set one debt against another of equal amount, and discharge both, proves a plea of payment, is this: if the parties met, and one of them actually paid the other in coin, and the other handed back the same identical coin in payment of the gross debt, both would be paid. When the parties agree to consider both debts discharged without actual payment, it has the same effect, because in contemplation of law, a pecuniary transaction is supposed to have taken place by which each debt was then paid."³ The set-off, however, must be perfected in order to be operative.⁴

Set-off, when agreed to, equivalent to payment.

§ 965. When there is an agreement between A. and B. for mutual set-off, whether such agreement be express or implied, debts from A. to B., which would be outlawed under the statute of limitations, are extinguished by the common set-off. The old outlawed debts are thrown into a gross mass with those not outlawed, and the balance due from A. is not within the statute.⁵ If an agreement of general set-off is shown, it operates even to cancel debts of which the consideration may be illegal.⁶ An agreement, however, for a general set-off must

Set-off appropriated to debts excluded by statute, and to illegal debts.

¹ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 711; Leake, 2d ed. 889; citing Co. Lit. 213a; Sinclair v. Baggaley, 4 M. & W. 312; Cellander v. Howard, 10 C. B. 290; Sturdy v. Arnaud, 3 T. R. 599; Leeds v. Burrows, 12 East, 1, where it was said that this mode of payment may be part of the original agreement in contracting the debts. As to set-off generally see *infra*, §§ 1009 et seq.

² Doyle v. Donnelly, 56 Me. 27.

³ Lord Campbell, C. J., in Livingstone v. Whiting, 15 Q. B. 723; Mel-

lish, L. J., in Livingstone v. Whiting, 15 Q. B. 723; Spargo's case, L. R. 8 Ch. 414; Rance's case, L. R. 6 Ch. 104; cited Leake, 2d ed. 889.

⁴ Gray v. White, 108 Mass. 228; see *infra*, §§ 1009 et seq.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 890; Ashby v. James, 11 M. & W. 542; Scholey v. Walton, 12 M. & W. 510; Worthington v. Grimsditch, 7 Q. B. 479.

⁶ Owens v. Denton, 1 C. M. & R. 711.

be shown in order to have this effect, since without such an agreement the mere existence of counter-claims will not exclude the statute, or preclude the illegality of a consideration from being excepted to.¹

IX. EFFECT OF PAYMENT.

§ 966. No matter how great may be the damage a creditor may sustain from the non-payment of his debt at maturity, he is not entitled to recover anything beyond principal and interest from his debtor. **Damages for detention of debt limited to interest.** "Nominal" damages he indeed recovers, but this is "a sum of money that may be spoken of, but that has no existence in point of quantity."² If before suit is brought the creditor accepts satisfaction for his debt, he cannot afterwards recover any damages whatever for the detention.³ But after suit is begun, payment of the debt does not extinguish the plaintiff's claim for costs and nominal damages.⁴

§ 967. After suit is brought, payment, in order to satisfy a debt, must be for interest and costs as well as for debt.⁵ Payment of the debt, by itself, does not bar the further pressure of the suit. Thus, when a holder of negotiable paper sues severally the parties liable on it, payment in full in one suit does not bar him from proceeding in the other suits for judgment on the penalty.⁶ **After suit brought, payment must cover interest and costs as well as debt**

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 890; Cottam v. Partridge, 4 M. & G. 271; Clark v. Alexander, 8 Scott, N. R. 147.

² Leake, 2d ed. 885.

³ Beamont v. Greathead, 2 C. B. 496.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 885; Nosotti v. Page, 10 C. B. 643; Cook v. Hopewell, 11 Ex. 555; Ash v. Pouppeville, L. R. 3 Q. B. 86; and see as to effect of tender, *infra*, §§ 970 *et seq.*

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 886; Thame v. Boast,

12 Q. B. 808; Gell v. Burgess, 7 C. B. 16. See as to tender, *infra*, § 976.

⁶ Randall c. Moon, 12 C. B. 261; Goodwin v. Cremer, 18 Q. B. 757. See further, *infra*, §§ 971 *et seq.* The payment, by the Roman law also, must be of the exact sum in money; for *aliud pro alio* cannot be rendered *invito creditore*. L. 27, and 50 D. h. t. Any other kind of payment requires the concurrence and approval of the creditor, and releases the debtor only *ope exceptionis*.

CHAPTER XXX.

TENDER.

I. TENDER OF MONEY IN DISCHARGE OF DEBT.

Distinction between tender of debt and tender of something in compliance with contract, § 970.

Tender is an offer of payment in full of a debt, § 971.

Tender stops interest and costs, § 972.

Tender not admissible for unliquidated damages, § 973.

May be made under protest, § 974.

Tender otherwise admits debt, § 975.

To discharge litigated debt, money must be paid into court, § 976.

Conditional tender inoperative, § 977.

Tender must be of exact sum, § 978.

To divisible debt there may be tender *pro tanto*, § 979.

Tender must be on precise day and in place fixed, § 980.

Plea of tender must set forth constant readiness to pay, § 981.

Tender may be made to or by agent or joint creditor or debtor, § 982.

Tender of money must give opportunity for inspection, though this may be waived, § 983.

Tender must be in current coin, but this may be waived, § 984.

Objection to character of money may be waived, § 985.

Cheque or other security is not tender, § 986.

II. DISTINCTIVE RULE AS TO GOODS.

Tender of goods must be specific, § 987.

Must be unconditional, § 988.

Goods must exactly correspond with description, and be merchantable by local law, § 989.

If delivered at time and place fixed, this is sufficient, § 990.

Party fixing place should notify other party, § 991.

Designation required as to bulky articles, § 992.

Tender of goods may transfer title, § 993.

Tender may be a prerequisite to establish a duty, § 994.

Tender may be waived, § 995.

I. TENDER OF MONEY IN DISCHARGE OF DEBT.

§ 970. TENDER is of two kinds. The first is where a debtor offers to his creditor money sufficient to pay a definite debt. This, as we will see, suspends interest on the debt and precludes damages for non-payment. The second is where there is an obligation by a party to a sale to deliver to the other party either goods or money at a specific time and place.

Distinction between tender of a debt and tender of something in compliance with contract.

Here a tender duly made extinguishes the claim. In the first case, therefore, the tender is the admission of an indebtedness, in the second it is the extinction of an indebtedness. The two kinds of tender, therefore, are widely different, and some confusion has arisen from their being discussed under one general head. In the present chapter they will be treated separately, so far as concerns their distinctive characteristics.¹

§ 971. A tender in the first sense is an offer of money in payment in full of a definite debt which has matured, and, to be effective, must cover not only the debt, but all interest which has accrued on it.²

Tender is an offer of payment in full of a debt. If made in lieu of payment, it must embrace a sum of money equal to the sum due.³ If made after a suit has commenced, it must also include all costs that have been incurred in its maintenance.⁴ A tender rests on the supposition "that the defendant has been always ready to perform entirely the contract on which the action is founded; and that he did perform it, as far as he was able, by tendering the requisite money; the plaintiff himself precluding a complete performance by refusing to receive it."⁵ It claims, therefore, that, as the plaintiff could have got what he wanted without suit, suit was unnecessary and vexatious.⁶

§ 972. When a debt is due, the debtor's liability, so far as concerns future accruing interest, is put an end to by a tender of the debt.⁷ But if the tender be refused, and the debtor in any way consents to the

¹ As to time of performance of a contract, see *supra*, §§ 881 *et seq.* As to payment, see *supra*, §§ 923 *et seq.*

² Bac. Abr. Tender; Com. Dig. Tender. That tender must be made personally, see *supra*, § 873.

³ *Infra*, § 978; Benj. on Sales, § 713; Startup v. Macdonald, 6 M. & G. 593; Sargent v. Graham, 5 N. H. 440; Case v. Green, 5 Watts, 262; see Springport v. Bank, 84 N. Y. 403.

⁴ Emerson v. White, 10 Gray, 351; see Stevens v. Briggs, 14 Vt. 44.

⁵ Per cur. in Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 377; James v. Vane, 2 E. & E. 883; adopted Leake, 2d ed. 858.

⁶ Carley v. Vance, 17 Mass. 369; Coit v. Houston, 3 Johns. Ca. 243; Law v. Jackson, 9 Cow. 641; Cornell v. Green, 10 S. & R. 14; Fuller v. Pelton, 16 Ohio, 457; Verges v. Giboney, 38 Me. 458.

⁷ Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 365; Dent v. Dunn, 3 Camp. 296; Carley v. Vance, 17 Mass. 389; Law v. Jackson, 9 Cow. 641; Cornell v. Green, 10 S. & R. 14.

continuance of the indebtedness, interest continues to run.¹ A tender, however, to stop interest, must imply continuous readiness to pay.²—In New York, a tender of payment after maturity of a debt releases the lien of a mortgage given to secure it,³ and so in Michigan.⁴ But the general rule is that, at common law, a tender after breach of the condition does not operate as a discharge of the mortgage.⁵ In New Hampshire, payment after the day is made good by statute.⁶

¹ See *Kirton v. Braithwaite*, 1 M. & W. 310; *Norton v. Ellam*, 2 M. & W. 461; *Maltby v. Murrells*, 5 H. & N. 813; *Hendee v. Howe*, 33 N. J. Eq. 92; and cases cited *infra*, § 980.

“It is now settled, by the decision of the queen’s bench in 1860 in *James v. Vane*, 2 E. & E. 883, overruling *Cooch v. Maltby*, 23 L. J. Q. B. 305, and affirming the earlier case of *Dixon v. Walker*, 7 M. & W. 214, that a tender is a bar to the action quoad its amount, and not merely a bar to damages.” *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 728.

² *Gray v. Angier*, 62 Ga. 596. Where a promissory note is payable on demand, it is due immediately on its delivery (*infra*, § 980), though it does not carry interest until demand unless it be so provided by its own terms. *Leake*, 2d ed. 861.

³ *Kortright v. Cady*, 21 N. Y. 343; *Edwards v. Ins. Co.*, 21 Wend. 467.

⁴ *Potts v. Plaisted*, 30 Mich. 149.

⁵ *Jones on Mort.* 2d ed. §§ 9, 892; *Rowell v. Mitchell*, 68 Me. 21; *Erskine v. Townsend*, 2 Mass. 493; *Currier v. Gale*, 9 Allen, 522; *Holman v. Bailey*, 3 Met. 55; *Shields v. Lozear*, 34 N. J. L. 496; *Story v. Krewson*, 55 Ind. 397; *Perre v. Castro*, 14 Cal. 519; *Himmelman v. Fitzpatrick*, 50 Cal. 650.

⁶ See *Robinson v. Leavitt*, 7 N. H. 73.

In Minnesota it is held that a tender of a mortgage debt to the sheriff after the foreclosure sale, and a refusal by

him to receive the amount necessary to redeem, does not operate as a discharge of the lien of the holder of the certificate of sale. *Schroeder v. Lahman*, S. C. Minn. 1881. In this case Mitchell, J., said: “The only question in the case is, whether a mere tender to the sheriff, and a refusal by him to receive the amount necessary to redeem, operates as a discharge of the lien of the holder of the certificate of sale. We are of opinion that this question must be answered in the negative. In such case the sheriff is not his agent, but merely the officer of the law with whom the redemptioner, if he sees fit, may deposit the money instead of paying it to the party to whom it belongs. No act of his can prejudice the rights of the holder of the certificate of sale. *Horton v. Maffitt*, 14 Minn. 289; *Davis v. Seymour*, 16 ib. 210; *Tinkcom v. Lewis*, 21 ib. 132; *Gilchrist v. Comfort*, 34 N. Y. 235. The only office or effect of such tender and refusal is that it will preserve and protect the right of the redemptioner to have the redemption perfected, if such right be seasonably asserted. The sheriff being the officer of the law, and not the agent of either party, his refusal to receive the money and to execute a certificate of redemption does not destroy the redemptioner’s right, if seasonably asserted, to have the redemption perfected and properly evidenced; neither does it impair the right of the holder

§ 973. In England, though there is authority to the effect that a tender is pleadable to a *quantum meruit*,¹ there can be no such plea to a suit for unliquidated damages.² In this country, under statute, in suits for damages for injuries, tenders are in some states allowed;³ though at common law the English rule obtains.⁴

Tender not
admissible
for unli-
quidated
damages.

§ 974. A tender may be made under protest; the party saying that he tenders the amount in controversy without admitting that he is bound for the debt;⁵ though the payment, in such case, if received, is absolute, and if not received, the tender is not operative if qualified by any condition.⁶

May be
made under
protest.

§ 975. If not made under protest, a tender admits the validity of the contract on which the payment is proposed to be made; and a plea of tender relieves the plaintiff from the necessity of proving his case.⁷

Tender
otherwise
admits
debt.

But a mere payment of money into court, without a specific designation of the debt it is meant to extinguish, does not, when the suit covers several claims, and the payment is only *pro tanto*, admit any specific claim.⁸ It is otherwise when the two counts which the declaration contains are for the same claim, the one stating it generally, on a *quantum meruit*, and

of the certificate to the redemption money, or, failing that, to acquire absolute title to the premises.”

¹ Giles v. Hart, 2 Salk. 622, though see report of this case in 1 Lord Ray. 255, and criticism in note to Dearle v. Barrett, 2 Ad. & E. 82.

² Dearle v. Barrett, 2 Ad. & E. 82.

³ See Brown v. Neal, 36 Me. 407; Slack v. Brown, 13 Wend. 390.

⁴ Green v. Shurtliff, 19 Vt. 592; Huntington v. Bk., 6 Pick. 340; Raymond v. Barnard, 12 Johns. 274; Law v. Jackson, 9 Cow. 641.

⁵ Scott v. R. R., L. R. 1 C. P. 596 (overruling Simmons v. Wilmot, 3 Esp. 91); Manning v. Lunn, 2 C. & K. 13; Sweny v. Smith, L. R. 7 Eq. 324; Gas-

sett v. Andover, 21 Vt. 342. See Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 725.

⁶ Wood v. Hitchcock, 20 Wend. 47. See Gassett v. Andover, 21 Vt. 342, where it was held that a tender made in full of all legal claims, which is received by the creditor with a protest that the sum is not sufficient, the creditor at the same time saying he will receive the money, and pass it to the debtor's account, will not bar the creditor's right to recover any amount due him exceeding the tender.

⁷ Stafford v. Clark, 2 Bing. 377; Bennett v. Francis, 2 B. & P. 550; Jones v. Hoar, 5 Pick. 291; Huntington v. Bank, 6 Pick. 340.

⁸ Stapleton v. Nowell, 6 M. & W. 9; Charles v. Branber, 12 M. & W. 743.

the other stating a contract of service ; in which case the paying money into court admits the contract.¹

§ 976. To constitute a discharge of a litigated debt, the plea must be accompanied by the payment, in suits on a money claim, of the money sued for into court ; and unless the money be so paid in, the plaintiff is entitled to judgment for the amount admitted to be due, with costs.² If the money, after a tender, be paid into court, the plaintiff, who persists in litigating the case and obtains judgment only for the amount paid in, cannot recover costs accruing after the tender.³ It is not necessary to show that the specific money paid into court is that actually tendered.⁴ The tender, in order to bar an action, must be pleaded.⁵

To discharge litigated debt, money must be paid into court.

§ 977. The tender, to be operative, must be absolute. The debtor can place on it no conditions other than those incident to the nature of the transaction ;⁶ and thence if made on the condition that the creditor would admit other claims to be unfounded, or that it cancels the debtor's general indebtedness, it is a nullity.⁷—It has also been held that a condition that a full receipt should be given

Conditional tender inoperative.

¹ *Elgar v. Watson*, 1 C. & M. 494 ; *Wright v. Goddard*, 8 Ad. & E. 144 ; *Bennett v. Francis*, 2 B. & P. 550 ; *Jones v. Hoar*, 5 Pick. 285 ; *Huntington v. Bank*, 6 Pick. 340. But see *Spalding v. Vandercook*, 2 Wend. 431.

² *Chapman v. Hicks*, 2 C. & M. 633 ; *Gilkeson v. Smith*, 5 W. Va. 128 ; see *supra*, § 960.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 859 ; see *Harmer v. Priestley*, 16 Beav. 569 ; *Shiver v. Johnston*, 62 Ala. 37 ; *supra*, § 960.

⁴ *Colby v. Stevens*, 38 N. H. 191.

⁵ *Hegler v. Eddy*, 53 Cal. 597.

⁶ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 721 ; *Bevans v. Rees*, 5 M. & W. 309 ; *Finch v. Miller*, 5 C. B. 428 ; *Steam Stoker Co. in re*, L. R. 19 Eq. 416 ; *Brown v. Gilmore*, 3 Greenl. 110 ; *Robinson v.*

Batchelder, 4 N. H. 40 ; *Buffum v. Buffum*, 11 N. H. 451 ; *Loring v. Cooke*, 3 Pick. 48 ; *Richardson v. Chemical Laboratory*, 9 Met. 42 ; *Wood v. Hitchcock*, 20 Wend. 47 ; *Eastland v. Longhorn*, 1 N. & McC. 194 ; *Flake v. Nuse*, 51 Tex. 98 ; see *Gould v. Bank*, 86 N. Y. 75.

⁷ *Leake*, 2d ed. 866 ; *Eckstein v. Reynolds*, 7 Ad. & E. 80 ; *Evans v. Judkins*, 4 Camp. 156 ; *Foord v. Noll*, 2 Dow. N. S. 617 ; *Bowen v. Owen*, 11 Q. B. 131 ; *Mitchell v. King*, 6 C. & P. 237 ; *Sutton v. Hawkins*, 8 C. & P. 259 ; *Hastings v. Thorley*, 8 C. & P. 573 ; *Hepburn v. Auld*, 1 Cranch, 321 ; *Richards v. Chem. Lab.*, 9 Met. 42 ; see *Brooklyn Bank v. Degrauw*, 23 Wend. 342.

vitiates a tender, though the creditor cannot afterwards on this ground impugn a tender made to him when at the time of the tender the only objection he made was to the amount.¹ And a debtor is, in any view, not entitled to insist on a receipt in full of all demands when this would cover a larger ground than that covered by the tender;² nor is the creditor bound to give such a receipt when it would cover anything more than the actual tender.³ If the condition, however, be one purely formal, which the debtor had a right to make, it does not vitiate the tender.⁴ And a condition not objected to at the time may be regarded as waived.⁵—The meaning of an ambiguous tender is for the jury; if unambiguous, for the court.⁶—A tender, as we

¹ Richardson v. Jackson, 8 M. & W. 298; Laing v. Meader, 1 C. & P. 257; see Thayer v. Brackett, 12 Mass. 450. In Cole v. Blake, Peake, 179, 238, and Laing v. Meader, 1 C. & P. 257, it was held that a *stamped* receipt could not be exacted. But in Richardson v. Jackson, 8 M. & W. 298, Rolfe, B., said: "I should be sorry to hold this to be a bad tender" (there being no objection at the time to the receipt being required) "on account of the receipt having been mentioned. I should wish to encourage all prudent people to take receipts, for if they do not, in case of death, the representatives may be deprived of all evidence of the payment." Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 726, referring also to Loring v. Cooke, 3 Pick. 48; Richardson v. Chemical Laboratory Co., 9 Met. 42; Wood v. Hitchcock, 20 Wend. 47.

In England by stat. 16 & 17 Vict. c. 59, stamps have to be attached to all receipts of 2*l.* or over, and the debtor is empowered to tender a blank receipt duly stamped at the time of payment. And it was held in Jones v. Arthur, 8 Dowl. 442, that a tender made by a cheque in a letter was not vitiated by the fact that the letter requested a receipt in return.

² Glasscott v. Day, 5 Esp. 48; Thayer v. Brackett, 12 Mass. 450; Sanford v. Bulkley, 30 Conn. 344; Wood v. Hitchcock, 20 Wend. 47; see Foster v. Drew, 39 Vt. 51.

³ Cheminant v. Thornton, 2 C. & P. 50; Sanford v. Bulkley, 30 Conn. 344.

⁴ Saunders v. Frost, 5 Pick. 259; Wheelock v. Tanner, 39 N. Y. 481.

⁵ Richardson v. Jackson, 8 M. & W. 298; Saunders v. Frost, 5 Pick. 259.

⁶ Eckstein v. Reynolds, 7 Ad. & E. 80; Marsden v. Goode, 2 C. & K. 133. In Bowen v. Owen, 11 Q. B. 130, adopted by Mr. Benj. (3d Am. ed. § 724) as giving the latest law on this topic, a tenant sent an agent to his landlord with a letter, saying: "I have sent with the bearer, T. T., a sum of 26*l.* 5*s.* 7½*d.* to settle one year's rent of Nant-y-pair." The agent told the landlord he had the money with him, but the landlord refused it, saying more was due. The agent went away, but soon came back again, saying he had a few pounds more in his pocket to pay certain arrears of duties, but the landlord again refused, saying more was due. It was held in the king's bench that the tender was conditional, Earle, J., saying: "The person making a tender has a right to exclude pre-

have already seen, is not vitiated by the fact that it is accompanied by a protest.¹

§ 978. A tender of a sum greater than that due, is not sufficient when the sum is exhibited in large notes or coin, and the creditor is called upon to make change which he refuses to do;² though it is otherwise when the sum is in itself divisible, so that the excess can be at once returned to the debtor and the remainder retained.³ And when there are several debts due from the same debtor, a gross tender of all these sums is sufficiently formal;⁴ though, as will be presently seen, when a debt is divisible a tender of a substantive part is good and operates to relieve *pro tanto*; though a tender of a fraction of an indivisible claim is inoperative.⁵ But a tender on a debt secured by a common money bond need not be for the penalty. It is sufficient if for the actual indebtedness.⁶—A proposition to pay a mortgage debt if certain interest alleged to be usurious be stricken off, is not a tender.⁷—A creditor, however, who puts it out of his debtor's power to know the exact sum due, cannot object to a tender, on the ground that it does not reach the exact sum, supposing that it adequately approximates to such sum.⁸ Thus, where a vendor wrongfully destroyed the contract of sale on which prior payments to him were endorsed, it was held that a tender by the vendee of a less sum than that actually due, together with an offer to pay whatever might prove to be really due, was sufficient.⁹

sumptions against himself, by saying, 'I pay this as the whole that is due you,' but if he requires the other party to accept it as all that is due, that is imposing a condition; and when the offer is so made, the creditor may refuse to consider it as a tender."

¹ *Supra*, § 974.

² *Watkins v. Robb*, 2 Esp. 711; *Batterbee v. Davis*, 3 Camp. 70; *Robinson v. Cook*, 6 Taunt. 336; *Sargent v. Graham*, 5 N. H. 440; *Boyden v. Moore*, 5 Mass. 365.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 864; *Wade's case*, 5

Co. 115 a; *Douglas v. Patrick*, 3 T. R. 683; *Dean v. James*, 4 B. & Ad. 546; *Beavans v. Rees*, 5 M. & W. 306. A tender, though not in technical shape such as to bar costs, may operate so as to suspend interest. *Suffolk Bank v. Worcester Bank*, 5 Pick. 106.

⁴ *Thetford v. Hubbard*, 22 Vt. 440.

⁵ *Infra*, § 979.

⁶ *Tracy v. Strong*, 2 Conn. 659.

⁷ *Harmon v. Magee*, 57 Miss. 410.

⁸ See *supra*, §§ 603, 612, 716, 747.

⁹ *Downing v. Plate*, 90 Ill. 268.

§ 979. Where an indebtedness consists of several divisible claims, a tender to pay one of them may be *pro tanto* good.¹ And a tender may be made to one of several items;² though, unless the tender in such case go specifically to a single divisible debt, it is inoperative.³ But to enable a tender to take effect in respect to one out of several claims of the creditor on the debtor, it must be distinctly pointed to such claim. If made generally, without being thus apportioned, and if it be insufficient to meet the aggregate indebtedness, it fails to take effect.⁴ When a claim is not divisible, a tender of money to pay a part of it is defective unless accepted *pro tanto* by the creditor;⁵ though an acceptance *pro tanto* would not preclude him from claiming the residue.⁶—A tender cannot be made by tacking a set-off to a sum in cash;⁷ though the practice may be different in jurisdictions where set-offs extinguish claims prior to suit.⁸—A reception of an amount smaller than an alleged entire indebtedness does not impair the creditor's right to the part of his claim not thus paid off.⁹

§ 980. Whenever by the terms of a contract a debt must be paid on a particular day, it must at common law be tendered on that day; and the tender must be made a sufficient time before midnight to enable the other party to receive and count it.¹⁰ This has frequently

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 865; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 719; Jones v. Owen, 5 Ad. & E. 222; Branden v. Newington, 3 Q. B. 915; Hesketh v. Fawcett, 11 M. & W. 366; Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 365. As to divisibility, see *supra*, §§ 233, 338, 511, 552, 899.

² Robinson v. Ward, 8 Q. B. 920.

³ Ibid.; Tyler v. Bland, 9 M. & W. 338; Searles v. Sadgrove, 5 E. & B. 639.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 865; Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 719; Strong v. Harvey, 3 Bing. 304; Hardingham v. Allen, 5 C. B. 793.

⁵ Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 365; Boyden v. Moore, 5 Mass. 365; Cupples v. Gallighan, 6 Mo. Ap. 62.

⁶ Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 365; Bowen v. Owen, 11 Q. B. 130.

⁷ Leake, 2d ed. 865; citing Searles v. Sadgrove, 5 E. & B. 639; Phillpotts v. Clifton, 10 W. R. Ex. 135; Bellows v. Smith, 9 N. H. 285; Cary v. Bancroft, 14 Pick. 315; see Brooklyn Bk. v. De Grauw, 23 Wend. 342.

⁸ Foley v. Mason, 6 Md. 37.

⁹ Henwood v. Oliver, 1 Q. B. 409; Finch v. Miller, 5 C. B. 428.

¹⁰ *Supra*, §§ 869 *et seq.* 884; Wade's case, 5 Co. Rep. 114, *a*; Startup v. Macdonald, 6 M. & G. 593; City Bank v. Cutter, 3 Pick. 414; Dewy v. Humphrey, 5 Pick. 187; *aliter* in Connecticut, Tracy v. Strong, 2 Conn. 659. In Massachusetts by Gen. Stat. c. 130, §

been held to be the case with regard to negotiable paper. "A plea by the acceptor of a bill or the maker of a note, of a tender *post diem*, is bad, notwithstanding the tender is of the amount of the bill or note, with interest from the day it became due up to the day of the tender, and notwithstanding the plea alleges that the defendant was always ready to pay, not only from the time of the tender, but also from the time when the bill or note became payable."¹—Tender by drawer or endorser must be immediately on receipt of notice of dishonor.² Tender of the amount due on a note payable on demand may be made at any time before its actual demand.³—Tender, also, may be made at any time of an indebtedness arising from money lent or goods sold on which there is no designated credit,⁴ or on a banker's account, or the account of a party with whom money is deposited.⁵—To a plea of tender it may be replied that the tender was too late;⁶ but the fact that the plaintiff had previously instructed an attorney to bring an action for the debt, and that process had been applied for, is no replication to a tender made before process issued;⁷ the defendant not being bound in such case for the cost of the writ or that of the attorney's letter.⁸—A tender of rent is good when made even on a late hour of the day when

23, a tender may be made at any time after maturity. See 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1190. That last limit as to time is allowed, see *infra*, §§ 884–5. As to cases in which time is of essence, see *supra*, § 887.

¹ Hume v. Peploe, 8 East, 168; Poole v. Tunbridge, 2 M. & W. 223; City Bank v. Cutter, 3 Pick. 414; Dewey v. Humphreys, 5 Pick. 187.

² Leake, 2d ed. 860; citing Walker v. Barnes, 5 Taunt. 240; Siggers v. Lewis, 1 C. M. & R. 370.

³ Parke, B., Norton v. Ellam, 2 M. & W. 461; Cotton v. Goodwin, 7 M. & W. 147.

⁴ Ibid.; Kingston v. Kingston, 11 M. & W. 233.

⁵ Ibid.; Pott v. Clegg, 16 M. & W. 321.

⁶ Smith v. Manners, 5 C. B. N. S. 632.

⁷ Briggs v. Calverley, 8 T. R. 629; Moffat v. Parsons, 5 Taunt. 307.

⁸ Kirton v. Braithwaite, 1 M. & W. 310; Caine v. Coulton, 1 H. & C. 764. See as to costs *supra*, § 972. In Poole v. Tunbridge, 2 M. & W. 223, Parke, J., said: "It is also clearly settled that the meaning of a plea of tender is that the defendant was always ready to perform his engagement according to the nature of it, and did perform it as far as he was able, the other party refusing to receive the money. Hume v. Peploe is a decisive authority that the plea must state, not only that the defendant was ready to pay on the day of payment, but that he tendered on that day. This plea does not so state, and is therefore bad." See Rose v. Brown, Kirby, 295.

it becomes due,¹ and usually performance may be deferred to the last business hour of the day.² This rule has been, however, modified in many jurisdictions so as to sustain tenders when made on a day after the maturity of the debt, provided time was not of the essence of the contract.³—A tender before the maturity of a debt, when a debt draws interest, is defective;⁴ though it has been questioned whether, apart from the question of interest, a tender of payment of a debt before maturity is not good,⁵ and Mr. Parsons⁶ argues that “the courts of this country would, generally, hold a tender valid that was made before the debt was due, provided the debt did not draw interest, or if, when the debt did draw interest, the tender included interest to the maturity of the debt.” But this would put creditors to a great disadvantage, debts payable in future becoming virtually debts payable at the election of the debtor. Mortgagees, for instance, would pay off when interest fell, and hold on when interest rose; and securities payable at no matter how distant a date would really be payable at any time at the will of the debtor. That this is not the sense of the business community is illustrated by the fact that good six per cent. loans which a few years ago sold at par, are now (1882) selling at a premium of twenty per cent. That they could not be paid off before maturity, this premium shows.—The place of tender is usually the place of payment.⁷

§ 981. The plea of tender must aver not only a past tender, but a continued readiness to perform entirely the contract on which the suit is founded. It must aver that the defendant was always ready and still is ready to pay—*toujours prist*, and *uncore prist*. If the plaintiff can falsify the averment of *toujours prist* by showing that at any time after the maturity of the debt he demanded payment and was refused, he is entitled to suc-

Plea of tender must set forth constant readiness to pay.

¹ Thomas v. Hayden, 19 Vt. 589.

⁴ Saunders v. Frost, 5 Pick. 267;

² Savary v. Goe, 3 Wash. C. C. 140;

Tillon v. Britton, 4 Halst. 120.

Aldrich v. Albee, 1 Greenl. 120; *supra*,

⁵ M'Hard v. Whetoroft, 3 H. & McH.

§§ 884-5. See Gould v. Banks, 8

85.

Wend. 562.

⁶ Cont. II. 642.

³ Tracy v. Strong, 2 Conn. 659.

⁷ As to tender on Sunday, see *infra*, § 990; *supra*, §§ 873, 897.

ceed.¹ But it is no sufficient reply to a plea of *toujours prist* that the plaintiff demanded a larger sum than that admitted to be due by the defendant, and that this demand was refused. That the defendant refused to pay a larger sum than was due does not show that he did not remain ready to pay that which was admitted to be due.²—The plea will be bad in substance if it does not allege an actual tender of the money, even though it could contain a *profert in curiam*.³ The plea, also, must contain a *profert in curiam* of the money tendered, and must be pleaded in bar of damages *ultra etc.*⁴

§ 982. Tender may be made as effectively to an agent duly authorized to represent the principal as it could be to the principal.⁵ Hence, tender to an attorney employed to bring suit, or to his clerk doing business for him, is sufficient.⁶ A promisee cannot by stratagem or evasion exclude a debtor from this right; and if a promisee intentionally keeps out of the way in order to avoid a tender, a tender on his nearest representative is sufficient.⁷ Tender may be as effectually made by an agent as it could be made by the principal,⁸ this being essential in all cases where the principal is not *sui juris*.⁹ When a debt is due to several joint creditors, a tender to one is sufficient;¹⁰ and so is a tender by one of several joint debtors.¹¹ To tender

Tender may be made to or by agent of joint creditor or debtor.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 859; Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. & B. 377; Cotton v. Godwin, 7 M. & W. 147; Hume v. Peploe, 8 East, 168; Carr v. Miner, 92 Ill. 604; Nixon v. Bullock, 9 Yerg. 414; Miller v. McClain, 10 Yerg. 245; Lanier v. Trigg, 6 Sm. & M. 641; Besancon v. Shirley, 9 Sm. & M. 457.

² See Dixon v. Clark, 5 C. B. 378; Thetford v. Hubbard, 22 Vt. 440.

³ French v. Watson, 2 Wils. 74.

⁴ Claffin v. Hawes, 8 Mass. 261; Carley v. Vance, 17 Mass. 389; Sheriden v. Smith, 2 Hill, N. Y. 538; Earle v. Earle, 1 Harr. 273; Crawford v. Harvey, 1 Blackf. 383.

⁵ Wh. on Agency, § 207; Goodland v. Blewith, 1 Camp. 477; Kirton v. Braithwaite, 1 M. & W. 310; Moffat

v. Parsons, 5 Taunt. 307; Kincaid v. Brunswick, 2 Fairf. 188; Hoyt v. Byrnes, 2 Fairf. 475; McIniffe v. Wheelock, 1 Gray, 600; see Renard v. Turner, 42 Ala. 117; Billiot v. Robinson, 13 La. An. 529. That tender must be made personally, see *supra*, § 873.

⁶ Crozer v. Pilling, 4 B. & C. 28; Kirton v. Braithwaite, *ut supra*; Hoyt v. Byrnes, 2 Fairf. 475.

⁷ Southworth v. Smith, 7 Cush. 391.

⁸ Read v. Goldring, 2 M. & S. 86.

⁹ Brown v. Dysinger, 1 Rawle, 408.

¹⁰ Dawson v. Ewing, 16 S. & R. 371.

¹¹ Douglas v. Patrick, 3 T. R. 683; Wallace v. Kelsall, 7 M. & W. 264; Gordan v. Ellis, 7 M. & G. 607; Brandon v. Scott, 7 E. & B. 234; see Oatman v. Walker, 33 Me. 67.

by agent the same distinctions as to ratification apply as apply to other acts by agents.¹

§ 983. To give effect to a tender of money, there must be opportunity given to the creditor to inspect it. It will be sufficient to bring it in bags or other receptacles usual for carrying money, provided the creditor can open them readily and examine their contents; though it is otherwise with boxes, so locked or fastened that they cannot be readily examined.²

The creditor may waive inspection by refusing to look at the money tendered. It is his duty, not that of the debtor, to count the money.³ But unless the money be exhibited in package or bag, if not actually spread out to the eye, a mere statement by the debtor that he has the money with him is not made a sufficient tender by the declaration of the creditor that he will not receive it.⁴ On the other hand, the creditor who claims a larger amount, and on this ground repels a proffered tender, when the money is exhibited though only in package, cannot afterwards except to the non-production of the money.⁵ But it has been held a sufficient tender where the defendant, at her own house, offered to pay the plaintiff 10l., saying she would go up-stairs and bring it, when the plaintiff said "she need not trouble herself, for he would not take it;"⁶ and so where the defendant said that he had the exact money in his pocket, and the creditor said "he need not

¹ *Harding v. Davies*, 2 C. & P. 78; *Reed v. Goldring*, 2 M. & S. 86.

² *Wade's case*, 5 Co. Rep. 114 a; Co. Lit. 208 a.

³ *Isherwood v. Whitmore*, 11 M. & W. 347; *Leatherdale v. Sweepstone*, 3 C. & P. 342; *Sargent v. Graham*, 5 N. H. 440; *Breed v. Hurd*, 6 Pick. 356; *Southworth v. Smith*, 7 Cush. 391; *Wheeler v. Knaggs*, 8 Ohio, 169; *Behaly v. Hatch*, *Walker* (Miss.) 369.

⁴ *Leake*, 2d ed. 863; *Glascott v. Day*, 5 Esp. 48; *Thomas v. Evans*, 10 East, 101; *Finch v. Brook*, 1 Bing. N. C. 253; *Blight v. Ashley*, 2 Pet. C. C. 24; *Brown v. Gilmore*, 8 Greenl. 107; *Fuller v. Little*, 7 N. H. 535; *Knight v. Abbott*, 30 Vt. 577; *Breed v. Hurd*, 6 Pick. 356; *Bakeman v. Pooler*, 15 Wend. 637; *Strong v. Blake*, 46 Barb. 227; *Wheeler v. Knaggs*, 8 Ohio, 169; *Englander v. Rogers*, 41 Cal. 420.

⁵ *Bayley, J.*, *Polglass v. Oliver*, 2 C. & J. 15. See *Ashburn v. Poulter*, 35 Conn. 553; *Brewer v. Fleming*, 51 Penn. St. 102; *Rudolph v. Wagner*, 36 Ala. 698.

⁶ *Harding v. Davies*, 2 C. & P. 77. See comments in *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 714; *Sargent v. Graham*, 5 N. H. 440; *Breed v. Hurd*, 6 Pick. 356.

give himself the trouble of offering it, for he would not take it, as the matter was in the hands of his attorney;"¹ and where the defendant, without opening his hand, said that he had in it the money, and the plaintiff said he would not take it.²—A debtor cannot be precluded from the right of tender by either the artifice³ or the prohibition of the creditor; and it is enough, therefore, if the debtor does all he can towards paying the money, leaving the responsibility of non-acceptance with the plaintiff.—"The production of the money, and the actual offer of it to the creditor, is dispensed with, if the party is ready and willing to pay it, and is about to produce it, but is prevented from so doing by a declaration that he will not or cannot receive it."⁴ But the mere bringing a party ready to pay the money as security is no tender unless the money be actually brought in and exhibited.⁵—If the creditor refuses to receive the tender, which is left with him, but afterwards declines to return it when sent for, this is equivalent to an acceptance.⁶

§ 984. Tender must be made in current coin, lawful in place of tender.⁷ The fact that a note is issued by a party does not make that note currency so far as concerns that party.⁸ Even to the

Tender must be in current coin, but this may be waived.

¹ *Douglas v. Patrick*, 3 T. R. 683. In *Leatherdale v. Sweepstone*, 3 C. & P. 342, where the defendant offered to

pay the plaintiff, and put his hand in his pocket to bring out the money, but before it was exhibited the plaintiff left the room, Lord Tenterden held there was no tender. See to same general effect *Lockyer v. Jones*, Peake, 180 n. In *Finch v. Brook*, 1 Bing. N. C. 253, Vaughan, J., quoted Sir James Mansfield as saying that "great importance is attached to the production of money, as the sight of it might tempt the creditor to yield."

² *Alexander v. Brown*, 1 C. & P. 288.

³ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. § 714; *Borden v. Borden*, 5 Mass. 67; *Gilmore v. Holt*, 4 Pick. 258; *Tasker v. Bartlett*, 5 Cush. 359; *Hazard v. Loring*,

10 Cush. 267; *Sands v. Lyon*, 18 Conn. 18; *Thorne v. Mosher*, 5 C. E. Green, 257.

⁴ *Bigelow, J.*, *Hazard v. Loring*, 10 Cush. 267, citing *Barker v. Parkenhorn*, 2 Wash. C. C. 142; *Blight v. Ashley*, Peters C. C. 15.

⁵ *Blight v. Ashley*, 2 Pet. C. C. 24; *Fuller v. Little*, 7 N. H. 535; *Breed v. Hurd*, 6 Pick. 356; *Bakeman v. Pooler*, 15 Wend. 637.

⁶ *Rogers v. Rutter*, 11 Gray, 410.

⁷ *Co. Lit.* 207 b; *Leake*, 2d ed. 862; *Moody v. Mahurin*, 4 N. H. 296; *Coxe v. Bank*, 3 Halst. 172.

⁸ *Bellows v. Smith*, 9 N. H. 285; *Cary v. Bancroft*, 14 Pick. 315. See, however, *Foley v. Mason*, 6 Md. 37, and cases cited *supra*, § 786.

bank issuing notes, such notes cannot at common law be paid as cash.¹—In England, special statutes have been passed making Bank of England notes legal tenders as long as they are redeemed in coin. By statute, also, gold coins are legal tenders without limit; silver coins to an amount not exceeding forty shillings; bronze coins to an amount not exceeding one shilling.² In this country, the states are precluded by the constitution of the United States from passing legal tender acts. The act of congress making treasury notes of the United States government legal tenders has been held by a majority of the judges of the supreme court of the United States to be constitutional, as well as to debts incurred before the statute as to those incurred afterwards.³ The opinion of the court on this question, however, is stripped of much of its weight by the fact that on the first hearing, while the court was unanimous in affirming the constitutionality of the statute as to debts incurred after its passage, there was a majority affirming the unconstitutionality of the statute so far as concerns debts incurred before its passage; and that it was not until after the appointment of two new judges that a majority of one affirming the constitutionality of the statute was secured.—It is conceded that, when a debt is made explicitly payable in gold or silver, it must be so paid.⁴

§ 985. The objection to the character of the money must be specific, and may be waived by the creditor. Thus where a creditor, on a payment being tendered to him in bank-notes which are not a legal tender, objects, not to the character of the notes, but to the amount, this is a waiver of the objection to the character of the notes.⁵

¹ *Hallowell Bank v. Howard*, 13 Mass. 235; *Coxe v. Bank*, 3 Halst. 172; *supra*, § 786. But see *Northampton Bank v. Balliet*, 8 W. & S. 311.

² Leake, 2d ed. 864.

³ *Knox v. Lee*, 12 Wall. 457; *Parker v. Davies*, 12 Wallace, 461; see *Metrop. Bk. v. Van Dyck*, 27 N. Y. 400; *Verges v. Giboney*, 38 Mo. 458; *Van Huse v. Kanouse*, 13 Mich. 303.

⁴ *Butler v. Horwitz*, 7 Wall. 258;

Trebilcock v. Wilson, 12 Wall. 687; *Indep. Ins. Co. v. Thomas*, 104 Mass. 192; *Rankin v. Demott*, 61 Penn. St. 263; *Vilhac v. Biven*, 28 Cal. 410; *O'Neil v. McKewn*, 1 S. C. 147. But see *Jones v. Smith*, 48 Barb. 552.

⁵ Leake, 2d ed. 864; *Polglass v. Oliver*, 2 C. & J. 15; *Jones v. Arthur*, 8 Dow. 442; *Steam Stoker Co. in re*, L. R. 19 Eq. 416; *Snow v. Perry*, 9 Pick. 542; *Warren v. Mains*, 7 Johns. 476.

If the objection be not specifically taken, bank-notes will be considered as a sufficient tender.¹ If required, however, the payment must be in currency.²

§ 986. Unless requested by the creditor, a debtor does not discharge his indebtedness by a cheque or post-office order, though it is otherwise if the creditor collects the money or loses the security. He may, however, refuse to receive it, or if he receive it, may retain it as collateral, without accepting it in liquidation.³ It has been held, however, in Maryland, that a tender of the creditor's own overdue notes is equivalent to a tender of currency;⁴ and this may be the law in those states in which a set-off may be used as a tender, but not elsewhere.⁵ At common law, the tender can only be made in currency.⁶

Cheque or other security is not a tender.

II. DISTINCTIVE RULE AS TO GOODS.

§ 987. A tender of goods, to be operative, must be made in such a way as to enable the creditor to see that the articles tendered are what he is really required to take.⁷ Hence, an offer to deliver in closed casks, in which it is alleged the goods are contained, but examination of which is refused, is not an adequate tender.⁸ The goods

Tender of goods must be specific.

¹ Benj. on Sales, 3d Am. ed. § 716; *Caine v. Coulton*, 1 H. & C. 764; *Bank U. S. v. Bank of Georgia*, 10 Wheat. 333; *Snow v. Perry*, 9 Pick. 542; *Warren v. Mains*, 7 Johns. 476; *Brown v. Dysinger*, 1 Rawle, 408; *Towson v. Bank*, 6 Har. & J. 53; *Wheeler v. Knaggs*, 8 Ohio, 169; *Fosdick v. Van Huse*, 21 Mich. 567; *Seawell v. Henry*, 6 Ala. 226; *Williams v. Rorer*, 7 Mo. 556; *Cockrill v. Kirkpatrick*, 9 Mo. 697; *Ball v. Stanley*, 5 Yerg. 197; *Noe v. Hodges*, 3 Humph. 162.

² *Moody v. Mahurin*, 4 N. H. 296; *Donaldson v. Benton*, 4 Dev. & B. 435.

³ *Hough v. May*, 4 Ad. & E. 954; *Gordon v. Strange*, 1 Ex. 477; *Grussy v. Schneider*, 50 How. Pr. 134; as to

payment by cheques, see § 953; see *Dunham v. Jackson*, 6 Wend. 22, where the offer, however, was merely to draw a cheque. *Cf. Jennings v. Mendenhall*, 7 Oh. St. 257.

⁴ *Foley v. Mason*, 6 Md. 37.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 865; *Searles v. Sadgrove*, 5 E. & B. 639; *Phillpotts v. Clifton*, 10 W. R. Ex. 135.

⁶ *Supra*, § 984.

⁷ *Veazy v. Harmony*, 7 Greenl. 91; *Bates v. Churchill*, 32 Me. 31; *Newton v. Galbraith*, 5 Johns. 119; *Barns v. Graham*, 4 Cow. 482. As to tender in rescission, see *supra*, § 285.

⁸ *Isherwood v. Whitmore*, 10 M. & W. 757.

must be specifically set apart by the debtor,¹ unless accepted *pro tanto*.²

§ 988. The rule already stated that a tender must be unconditional applies as fully to goods as to money.³ Hence, a tender of goods on condition that the creditor will cancel and deliver up the contract is inoperative.⁴

§ 989. As is elsewhere seen, the goods tendered must conform to the description in the contract,⁵ and must be merchantable by local law.⁶ But a substantial conformity is sufficient.⁷

§ 990. If a specific time and place be fixed for the delivery, it is a sufficient tender of the debt for the debtor to be present at the designated place and time with the thing to be delivered.⁸ If the creditor refuses to attend at such time and place, this, supposing the tender to be duly made, relieves the debtor from liability.⁹ If the place be not fixed, the debtor must seek out the creditor, and deliver to him personally, though to perform a home contract it will not be necessary for him to follow the creditor to a foreign state.¹⁰ When the contract provides that goods shall

¹ *Veazy v. Harmony*, 7 Greenl. 91; *Leballister v. Nash*, 24 Me. 316; *Bates v. Churchill*, 32 Me. 31; *Barney v. Bliss*, 1 D. Chip. 399; *Newton v. Galbraith*, 5 Johns. 119. A tender of part of the goods is inadequate. *Russell v. Nicoll*, 3 Wend. 112; *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 Pen. & W. 67.

² *Ibid.*; *Vance v. Bloomer*, 20 Wend. 200; *Dula v. Cowles*, 2 Jones, N. C. 454.

³ See *supra*, § 977.

⁴ *Robinson v. Batchelder*, 4 N. H. 40.

⁵ See *supra*, §§ 898 *et seq.*

⁶ See *supra*, §§ 869 *et seq.*; and see, also, Wh. Conf. of L. §§ 334 *et seq.*

⁷ *Supra*, §§ 220, 607, 869. As to merchantability, see *supra*, § 223.

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 871 *et seq.*; *Selby v. Eden*, 3 Bing. 611; *Fayle v. Bird*, 6 B. & C.

531; *Savary v. Goe*, 3 Wash. C. C. 140; *Gilmore v. Holt*, 4 Pick. 258; *Southworth v. Smith*, 7 Cush. 391; *Case v. Greene*, 5 Watts, 262; *Zinn v. Rowley*, 4 Barr, 169; see *Haynes v. Thom*, 28 N. H. 400; *Curtiss v. Greenbanks*, 24 Vt. 536; *Miles v. Roberts*, 34 N. H. 245.

⁹ *Robbins v. Luce*, 4 Mass. 474; *Jewett v. Bacon*, 6 Mass. 60; *Lamb v. Lathrop*, 13 Wend. 95.

¹⁰ *Supra*, §§ 872-3; *infra*, § 991; Co. Litt. 210 a; *Leake*, 2d ed. 853; *Cranley v. Hillery*, 2 M. & S. 120; *Allshouse v. Ramsay*, 6 Whart. 331; *Howard v. Miner*, 20 Me. 325; *Smith v. Smith*, 2 Hill, 351. Mr. Greenleaf (Ev. § 611) doubts whether, when the creditor is out of the state, the debtor has a right to fix a place of delivery. See on this point *supra*, §§ 872, 873; *infra*, § 991.

be delivered on a particular time at a particular place, conformity with this is sufficient;¹ and the delivery of the goods at that time and place relieves the debtor from further duty in this relation;² and this, even though no one be present to receive the tender.³ But it is elsewhere held, that a plea to be good under such circumstances, must aver that the defendant was always ready to deliver the goods.⁴—The *time* of tender has been independently considered.⁵—Where the place of delivery is to be designated by the vendee, a tender is not required on part of the vendor before action to recover the purchase-money; readiness and an offer to deliver are enough.⁶—When the contract is silent as to place, the “store of the merchant, the shop of the manufacturer or mechanic, and the farm, barn, or granary of the farmer, at which the commodities sold are deposited or kept, must be the place where the demand and delivery are to be made.”⁷ If a tender of specific goods be not on the day appointed, the promisor is liable to a suit without demand.⁸—Parol evidence is admissible to show what was the place of delivery agreed upon by the parties, such incident being collateral to the contract.⁹ When the day of payment falls on Sunday, a tender on the

¹ *Supra*, §§ 871 *et seq.*

² *Smith v. Loomis*, 7 Conn. 110, and see cases cited *supra*, § 871.

³ *Gilmore v. Holt*, 4 Pick. 258; *Southworth v. Smith*, 7 Cush. 391; *Case v. Green*, 5 Watts, 262; *Smith v. Loomis*, 7 Conn. 110.

⁴ *Nixon v. Bullock*, 9 Yerg. 414; *Miller v. McClain*, 10 Yerg. 245; see *Roberts v. Beatty*, 2 Pen. & W. 63.

⁵ *Supra*, § 980.

⁶ *Hunter v. Wetsell*, 84 N. Y. 549.

⁷ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1201, citing *Dunn v. Marston*, 34 Me. 379; *Miles v. Roberts*, 34 N. H. 245; *McKillop v. McKillop*, 8 Barb. 552; *Lobdell v. Hopkins*, 5 Cow. 518; *Vance v. Bloomer*, 20 Wend. 196; *Rice v. Churchill*, 2 Denio, 145; *Barr v. Myers*, 3 W. & S. 295; *Boswent v. Frankberger*, 15 Ill. 508; see *supra*, § 871, for other cases.

⁸ *Aldrich v. Albee*, 1 Greenl. 120; *Grieve v. Annin*, 1 Halst. 461; *Hamilton v. Eller*, 11 Ired. 276; *Mingus v. Pritchett*, 3 Dev. 78; *Sorrell v. Craig*, 8 Ala. 566; *supra*, § 881. As to demand see, further, *supra*, §§ 575, 616. See to same effect *Brown v. Berry*, 14 N. H. 459; *Gilman v. Moore*, 14 Vt. 457; *Bronson v. Wiman*, 4 Selden, 182. In *Appleton v. Hogan*, 9 B. Mon. 69, V. was shown to have agreed to deliver to P. a boat load of corn at Louisville as soon as the water permitted the boat to land. The place of delivery under such circumstances was held to be V.'s boat.

⁹ *Supra*, §§ 660–1, 910; Wh. on Ev. §§ 969, 1026; *Wyman v. Winslow*, 2 Fairf. 398; *Miles v. Roberts*, 34 N. H. 245; *Musselman v. Stoner*, 31 Penn. St. 265.

succeeding Monday is sufficient.¹—When the tender is complete in accordance with the contract, and is specific, the prevalent opinion, as we will see, is that the title in the goods rests in the creditor, and he may maintain trover for them.²

§ 991. Where the time of tender is not designated by the contract, it is incumbent, as we will presently see, on the party on whom the right of appointing the place falls, to give reasonable notice of the place designated, so that the other party can be in attendance.³ If there be no such notice, and if there is no demand by the party entitled to the goods, then the other party is not in default by omitting to tender them.⁴ And a designation of place is required in all cases in which the contract leaves the place open.⁵ While, as we have already seen, the debtor, in order to make a tender, is not required to follow the creditor into a foreign state,⁶ the fact that the creditor lives in a foreign country does not relieve the debtor from the duty of applying to him for instructions as to the place of delivery, or, if no such instructions are given, of notifying him of a proposed tender.⁷ But when a contract made in one state is to be performed in the same state, the promisor is not required to perform the contract in a foreign state to which the promisee may have moved.⁸

§ 992. We have already seen that when no place is designated for the performance of a contract, the place of performance is to be inferred from the contract, taking into consideration all the pertinent extrinsic facts.⁹ It has also been seen that articles difficult

¹ *Supra*, § 897.

² Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1211; *Leballister v. Nash*, 24 Me. 316; *Curtiss v. Greenbanks*, 24 Vt. 536; *Smith v. Loomis*, 7 Conn. 110; *Nichols v. Whiting*, 1 Root, 443; *Des Arts v. Leggett*, 16 N. Y. 582; see *Wyman v. Winslow*, 2 Fairf. 398; *infra*, § 993.

³ *Howard v. Miner*, 20 Me. 325.

⁴ *Sergeant, J., Barr v. Myers*, 3 W. & S. 299.

⁵ *Chase v. Flanders*, 2 N. H. 417.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 872–3, 990; *Howard v. Miner*, 20 Me. 325; *Bixby v. Whitney*, 5 Greenl. 192; *Smith v. Smith*, 25 Wend. 405; and cases cited *supra*, § 990.

⁷ *Bixby v. Whitney*, 5 Greenl. 192; *White v. Perley*, 15 Me. 470.

⁸ *Allshouse v. Ramsay*, 6 Wheat. 331; see *supra*, §§ 873, 990.

⁹ See *supra*, § 871.

to move are, as a rule, to be delivered at the place where they were deposited at the time of sale.¹ In other cases it is incumbent on the debtor, if desirous of making a tender, to seek the creditor, if within the state, and request him to fix the place for delivery. At this place the tender should be made, if the goods are not too cumbrous to be moved.² If the creditor refuses to appoint a place, or appoints an unsuitable place, the debtor may designate the place for delivery; and in this place, if suitable, tender may, after due notice, be made.³

§ 993. If a creditor to whom a tender of specific articles is made in performance of a contract refuses to receive the articles, while it is agreed that the contract is discharged by the tender, it has been doubted whether he obtains any title to the goods.—In a New Hampshire case it is insisted with much ability that no title passes by such a tender, though the contract is discharged.⁴ But the weight of authority is to the effect that a tender of goods, in pursuance of a contract, vests the property in the creditor, though he was absent at the time and did not accept the goods.⁵ Even if the debtor in such cases retains the goods, he does so, it is said, as the bailee of the creditor.⁶—And if the contract requires the vendor to deliver the goods at a particular time and place, the performance of these conditions vests the title in the purchaser.⁷

Tender of goods may transfer title.

§ 994. A tender may not merely be a mode of stopping

¹ *Supra*, § 872.

² *Bixby v. Whitney*, 5 Greenl. 192; *Howard v. Miner*, 20 Me. 325; *Goodwin v. Holbrook*, 4 Wend. 377; *Barr v. Myers*, 3 W. & S. 299; *Musselman v. Stoner*, 31 Penn. St. 265; *Mingus v. Pritchett*, 3 Dev. 78.

³ *Ibid.*; 2 Greenl. on Ev. § 610; *Aldrich v. Albee*, 1 Greenl. 120; *Miles v. Roberts*, 34 N. H. 245.

⁴ *Weld v. Hadley*, 1 N. H. 295.

⁵ 1 Swift's Sys. 404; *Smith v. Loomis*, 7 Conn. 110; *Slingerland v. Morse*, 8 Johns. 474; and other cases cited *supra*, § 990.

⁶ Story on Cont. § 1412; 2 Kent Com. Lect. 39, p. 509; *Lamb v. Lathrop*, 13 Wend. 95.

⁷ *Benj. on Sales*, 3d Am. ed. §§ 682 *et seq.* In *Wheelock v. Tanner*, 39 N. Y. 481, it was held that when a payment was to be made by the delivery of certain wagons, and the promisee was not ready to receive them at the time appointed, and they were consequently kept at his request by the promisor, a further tender of the wagons was unnecessary.

Tender may be a pre-requisite to establish a duty. further increment of a debt, but it may be a pre-requisite to establishing a duty. Thus a tender to a common carrier of a reasonable compensation may be necessary in order to impose on him a duty to carry a particular person or thing.¹ And on a tender of the amount due on a pledge, trover may be maintained by the pledgor if the pledgee refuses to restore.²

§ 995. To a party who declares he will not be bound by a contract, it is not necessary that a tender should be made.³ The general principle is that a party cannot defend himself on the ground of the non-performance on the other side of conditions whose performance he had already notified the other party would have been nugatory. If he declares himself not bound by the contract, or has incapacitated himself for its performance, he cannot set up failure in either demand or tender.⁴ "Where the vendor, before the time for the performance of his contract of sale, has disabled himself from performing his contract, neither a demand for performance, nor a tender of the consideration money, nor an averment of the plaintiff's readiness to accept the goods and pay for them, is necessary."⁵ "A party can only be obliged to make a tender when by making it he could obtain possession of the goods."⁶

¹ *Harris v. Packwood*, 3 Taunt. 264.
See *supra*, §§ 582, 601 *et seq.*

² *Walter v. Smith*, 5 B. & Ald. 439;
Parks v. Hall, 2 Pick. 206.

³ *Gerrish v. Norris*, 9 Cush. 167;
Carpenter v. Holcomb, 105 Mass. 280;
Curtis v. Aspinwall, 114 Mass. 187;
Galvin v. Collins, 128 Mass. 527;
supra, §§ 575 *et seq.*, 603.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 312, 325, 603, 716, 747,
901.

⁵ *Depue, J., Parker v. Pettit*, 43 N.
J. L. 517; citing *Bowdell v. Parsons*,
10 East, 359; *Lovelock v. Franklyn*,
8 Q. B. 371.

⁶ *Lyndhurst, C. B., Jones v. Cliff*, 1
C. & M. 541; and see cases *supra*,
§§ 604-6.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.

Accord and satisfaction is agreement to accept in satisfaction for a debt something received, § 996.

Acceptance of less amount is no satisfaction without release, § 997.

Accord and satisfaction with one joint creditor or debtor releases all, § 998.

Accord without satisfaction no bar, § 999.

Unliquidated debt for larger amount may be discharged on receipt of smaller amount in cash, § 1000.

Any additional weight turns the scale, § 1001.

Anticipation of time or change of place may be sufficient, § 1002.

An agreement to take a lesser amount secured is an accord and satisfaction when security is received, § 1003.

Acceptance of third party as security amounts to novation, § 1004.

When other creditors release, composition may be accord and satisfaction, § 1005.

Goods or labor may be taken in satisfaction, § 1006.

Part payment by judgment and execution may satisfy, § 1007.

Payment by a stranger may be accord and satisfaction, § 1008.

§ 996. ACCORD and satisfaction is an agreement to accept in satisfaction of a debt something at the time received.¹

The accord is the agreement for the reception of the thing in discharge of the debt; the satisfaction is the actual reception of the thing. Upon this satisfaction the creditor's right of action is extinguished; and written promises can be extinguished by this process as effectually as unwritten.² A distinction

at common law, however, exists between sealed and unsealed instruments. The tenor of the former can only be varied, at common law, so as to introduce a new mode of satisfaction,

Accord and satisfaction is agreement to accept in satisfaction of a debt something at the time received.

¹ Bac. Abr., Accord; Com. Dig., Ac. and Sat.; Kaye v. Waghorn, 1 Taunt. 428. See *supra*, § 504.

² Smith v. Trowsdale, 3 E. & B. 83; M'Kellar v. Wallace, 8 Moore P. C. 378;

Drake v. Mitchell, 3 East, 251; Edwards v. Chapman, 1 M. & W. 231; Anderson v. Turnpike Co., 16 Johns. 86.

by a writing under seal;¹ and hence it is held that "accord and satisfaction is no bar to an action for a debt covenanted to be paid."²—On the other hand, accord and satisfaction has been held a good plea to an action for breach of a covenant to repair, the action not being to enforce the covenant, but to claim damages for its non-fulfilment by the covenantor.³ And the distinction between sealed and unsealed instruments does not obtain in equity, nor in those systems in which equity is absorbed in the common law.⁴—Accord and satisfaction, being a matter of extrinsic settlement, may be proved by parol.⁵—The settlement, to be operative, must be immediate; an agreement to settle at a future time cannot be an accord and satisfaction.⁶—As to the thing received, an important distinction is to be observed. This thing may consist in money or labor or goods actually at the time delivered,⁷ or in a substantive security (*e. g.*, negotiable paper, or other independent engage-

¹ Blake's case, 6 Rep. 44. See as to sealed documents, *supra*, § 680.

² Massey v. Johnson, 1 Ex. 253, cited Leake, 2d ed. 877.

At common law, a liability on contracts under seal could not "be discharged by a mere license not under seal even for a valuable consideration, or even by accord and satisfaction before breach (Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 603, citing Berwick v. Oswald, 1 E. & B. 295; Spence v. Healey, 8 Exch. 668); and after breach, those claims arising out of them which sounded in damages, and not debts accruing by the execution of the deed only, could be the subject of accord and satisfaction." Blake's case, 6 Rep. 44; Selw. N. P. "Covenant," vii. 1. The present practice is stated in other sections. *Infra*, § 1032; *supra*, §§ 684 *et seq.*

That there may be parol novation of sealed contracts, see *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

That debts secured by instruments under seal may be barred by accord and satisfaction, see Jones v. Ransom,

3 Ind. 327, and see 7 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 697. "A parol accord and satisfaction cannot discharge the instrument, but may discharge the money due upon it." Ibid., citing Strang v. Holmes, 7 Cow. 225. "Upon the same distinction it is that accord and satisfaction before breach, without release of deed, is no bar to an action of covenant; but after breach, it is of the damages." Ibid., citing note to 6 M. & Gr. 262; Harper v. Hampton, 1 Har. & J. 622; Smith v. Brown, 3 Hawks. 580; Cabe v. Jameson, 10 Ired. 193.

³ Blake's case, 6 Rep. 44.

⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 378; citing Binns v. Fisher, 43 L. J. C. 188. See Coit v. Houston, 3 Johns. Ca. 243; *infra*, § 1032. As to distinction between sealed and unsealed contracts, see *supra*, § 684.

⁵ Lavery v. Turley, 6 H. & N. 239; Massey v. Johnson, 1 Ex. 241; Wh. on Ev. §§ 77, 1017.

⁶ *Infra*, § 999.

⁷ *Infra*, § 1006.

ment) for indebtedness. The latter case is virtually one of novation, as it is the acceptance of a new contract in place of an old contract which is superseded.¹ Hence, "an accord with mutual promises to perform is good, though the thing be not performed at the time of action; for the party has a remedy to compel the performance."² In such case, however, the accord must have been accepted in satisfaction.³ But unless there be a new consideration, such substitution is not operative.⁴ "Upon the whole," says Mr. Chitty, "the true distinction would seem to be, between cases in which the plaintiff has agreed to accept the promise of the defendant in satisfaction, and those in which he has agreed to accept the performance of such promise in satisfaction; the rule being that in the latter case there shall be no satisfaction without performance; whilst in the former, if the promise be not performed, the plaintiff's only remedy is by action for the breach thereof, and he has no right to recur to the original demand."⁵

¹ See *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.* That it may be proved by parol, see Wh. on Ev. § 1017.

² Com. Dig. Accord, B., adopted in Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 1122, as cited by Peake, J., in *Good v. Cheeseman*, 2 B. & Ad. 335; and per cur. *Cartwright v. Cooke*, 3 B. & Ad. 702. To the same effect are cited *Woodward v. Miles*, 24 N. H. 289; *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *Billings v. Vanderbeck*, 23 Barb. 546; *Perkins v. Lockwood*, 100 Mass. 249.—This distinction is adopted by Storrs, J., in *Goodrich v. Stanley*, 24 Conn. 613, who, after quoting the extract above given from Comyn, adds: "the meaning of which is, that an acceptance, in satisfaction of a debt, of an accord or agreement, with mutual promises to perform, on which the party has a legal remedy for its non-performance, is a good satisfaction of such debt, although such promises are not performed. . . . There must be a valid agreement, substituting a new cause of action in place of the old. It

is not sufficient that there is a mere accord between the same parties, with mutual promises, but there must be a new agreement with a new consideration. Although this doctrine, well established in the English cases, appears to have been regarded with disfavor in some of the courts of this country, we do not perceive why, on principle, an acceptance of a new and valid promise, which can be enforced in substitution of an existing claim, should not be held to be as effectual a satisfaction and extinguishment of such claim as the acceptance of any other thing."

³ *Flockton v. Hall*, 14 Q. B. 380; *Hall v. Flockton*, 16 Q. B. 1039.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.* As to release, see *infra*, §§ 1031 *et seq.*

⁵ Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 1124, citing *Evans v. Powis*, 1 Exch. 601; *Sard v. Rhodes*, 1 M. & W. 153; *Good v. Cheeseman*, 2 B. & Ad. 328. To the same effect is *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *Ranlett v. Moore*, 21 N. H. 336; *Woodward v. Miles*, 24 N. H. 289.

§ 997. An acceptance of an amount less than a debt cannot operate as a discharge of the debt unless there be a sealed release of the residue, or some additional consideration as an equipoise to the residue released. The rule is that payment of a less sum in satisfaction of a greater debt at the time liquidated, only discharges *pro tanto*;¹ and, although with occasional doubts as to the reasonableness of the position, it is held in many cases that

Acceptance
of less
amount is
no satisfac-
tion with-
out a
release.

And see for other cases *supra*, §§ 852-3; *Norris v. U. S.*, 14 Ct. of Cl. 354; *Murphy v. U. S.*, 14 Ct. of Cl. 508.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 494, 504, 935; Pownal's case, 5 Co. 117 a; *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Str. 426; *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed. 595 *et seq.*; *Down v. Hatcher*, 10 A. & E. 121; *Mitchell v. Cragg*, 10 M. & W. 367; *Orme v. Golloway*, 7 Ex. 544; *Gifford v. Whittaker*, 6 Q. B. 249; *Baillie v. Moore*, 8 Q. B. 489; *Bailey v. Day*, 26 Me. 88; *White v. Jordan*, 27 Me. 370; *Goodwin v. Follett*, 25 Vt. 386; *Harriman v. Harriman*, 12 Gray, 341; *Warren v. Hodge*, 121 Mass. 106; *Warren v. Skinner*, 20 Conn. 559; *Pabodie v. King*, 12 Johns. 426; *Bunge v. Koop*, 48 N. J. 225; *Ryan v. Ward*, 48 N. Y. 204; *Watts v. French*, 19 N. J. Eq. 407; *Rising v. Patterson*, 5 Whart. 316; *Jones v. Ricketts*, 7 Md. 108; *Hardey v. Coe*, 5 Gill, 189; *McKenzie v. Culbreth*, 66 N. C. L. 534; *Eve v. Moseley*, 2 Strobb. 203; *Pearson v. Thomason*, 15 Ala. 700; *Vance v. Lukenbill*, 9 B. Mon. 249; *Bryan v. Brazil*, 52 Iowa, 350; *Lankton v. Stewart*, 27 Minn. 346; see *Clifton v. Litchfield*, 106 Mass. 34. For other cases, see *supra*, §§ 494, 504.

In *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Str. 426, it was held that giving a note for 5*l.* is not a satisfaction for 15*l.* The decision has since been followed by innumerable cases, though the reason of Pratt, C. J., that the satisfaction "must appear to the court to be reasonable," "or at

least the contrary must not appear, as it does in this case," is no longer regarded as good, since it is now agreed on all sides that the courts will not judge of the sufficiency of a consideration. *Supra*, § 517. In the London Law Times for May 6, 1882, we have the following: "It is really time that the old rule in *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Str. 425; 1 Smith L. C. 7th edit. 341, was abolished. Mr. Pollock speaks of the rule having committed the English law to 'an absurd paradox.' In *Sibree v. Tripp*, 15 M. & W. 23, that case was 'considered,' and the court, as it could not overrule it, declared that the facts were not sufficiently stated to make it a binding authority. In *Goddard v. O'Brien*, which will be found in our reports of last week, 46 L. T. N. S. 306; L. R. 9 Q. B. D. 39, Mr. Justice Grove declared that *Cumber v. Wane* 'was entitled to every respect, although we may not see the reason on which it is founded.' Of course he distinguished the case before him from that respectable, but unreasonable, old case. Surely this needs legislation." *Fitch v. Sutton*, 5 East, 230, put the question on a firmer basis. The suit was *indebitatus assumpsit* for goods sold and delivered. The defendant, it appeared, owed the plaintiff 50*l.*, and compounded with his creditors, paying them seven shillings in the pound, and at the time of such payment to the plaintiff, to adopt Mr. Smith's

at common law, the payment of a smaller sum, without a release under seal, or without some additional consideration as hereinafter noticed, is no satisfaction of the claim for the entire amount, though there is a receipt in full.¹ "The payment of part of an acknowledged debt after its maturity has often been held to be no sufficient consideration for a release, not under seal, of the remainder. It has no effect as an accord and satisfaction, and rests upon no legal or valid consideration."²

summary, promised to pay him the residue of his debt, when he should be of ability so to do, which he was proved to have been before this action was brought. On the other hand, the defendant produced a receipt signed by the plaintiff, for the composition, and which purported to be in full of all demands. And it was urged that the receipt was either a discharge of the promise, or that the promise itself was void, as being a fraud upon his other creditors, or that at all events, the plaintiff ought not to have declared upon the original cause of action, but specially upon the new promise to pay when of ability. But the court *in banc*, after a verdict for the defendant, made a rule for a new trial absolute on the express grounds that the acceptance of 19l. 10s. could not be a satisfaction for a debt of 50l. "There must be some consideration," said Lord Ellenborough, "for the relinquishment of the residue, something collateral to show the possibility of benefit to the party relinquishing his further claim, otherwise the agreement is *nudum pactum*. But the mere promise to pay the rest, when of ability, puts the plaintiff in no better condition than he was before." *Cumber v. Wane* was then referred to as authoritative. To the same effect are cited *Heathcote v. Crooks*, 2 T. R. 24; *Lynn v. Bruce*, 2 H. Bl. 317; *Mitchell v. Cragg*, 10 M. & W. 367; and see in further recognition of

same principle, *Latapee v. Pecholier*, 2 Wash. C. C. 180; *Dederick v. Leman*, 9 Johns. 333; *Seymour v. Minturn*, 17 Johns. 169; *Moss v. Shannon*, 1 Hilt. 177; *Curtiss v. Martin*, 20 Ill. 575. That the rule is artificial and that any additional element of consideration will validate such a settlement, see *infra*, § 1001. As to Maine statute, see *Weymouth v. Babcock*, 42 Me. 44.

¹ *Down v. Hatcher*, 10 A. & E. 121; *Lewis v. Jones*, 4 B. & C. 513; *White v. Jordan*, 27 Me. 370; *Lee v. Oppenheimer*, 32 Me. 254; *Wheeler v. Wheeler*, 11 Vt. 60; *Twitshell v. Shaw*, 10 Cush. 48; *Tuttle v. Tuttle*, 12 Met. 551; *Harriman v. Harriman*, 12 Gray, 341; *Grinnell v. Spink*, 128 Mass. 25; *Dederick v. Leman*, 9 Johns. 333; *Seymour v. Minturn*, 17 Johns. 169; *Geiser v. Kershner*, 4 Gill & J. 305; *Eve v. Moseley*, 2 Strobb. 203; and cases cited in former notes to this section and to §§ 494, 504, 935.

² *Ames, J., Lathrop v. Page*, 129 Mass. 21, citing *Harriman v. Harriman*, 12 Gray, 341; *Jennings v. Chase*, 10 Allen, 526. In *Miller v. Hatch*, 72 Me. 481, the cases are thus reviewed by Appleton, C. J.: "In *Clifton v. Litchfield*, 106 Mass. 34, it was held that an executory contract, by way of compromise to discharge a disputed, unliquidated claim, by the giving of the debtor's promissory note, for a sum less than the amount actually due, was not a bar to a suit upon the original de-

§ 998. Where one of several parties jointly liable makes an accord and satisfaction with the common creditor for the common debt, this discharges the debt as to all the debtors;¹ though a partial payment does not work a bar.² When one of several joint creditors makes an accord and satisfaction with the common debtor, this discharges the debt as to all the creditors.³

Accord and satisfaction with one joint creditor or debtor discharges all.

§ 999. An accord without satisfaction is no bar. It is merely an agreement to do something in future, which, until done, cannot be regarded as extinguishing the right of action. The accord, to be a bar, must be executed before the action brought.⁴ The accord is a mere negotiation until satisfaction takes place, and the creditor can, until satisfaction, withdraw his acceptance at any time before the satisfaction is received.⁵ Hence an accord to

Accord without satisfaction no bar.

mand, although the note has been tendered the creditor, if it has not been accepted. In *Blake v. Blake*, 110 Mass. 202, the agreement was under seal. 'The agreement,' observes Wells, J., 'to accept a part in satisfaction of the whole, so long as it remains executory, will not operate either as payment, satisfaction, or discharge.' In *Cushing v. Wyman*, 44 Me. 121, the question here presented was fully examined and considered, and it was then held that an executory agreement constituted no bar to a suit."

¹ *Supra*, §§ 831, 998; *Nicholson v. Revill*, 4 A. & E. 675; *Barrett v. R. R.*, 45 N. Y. 628; *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391; see *Strang v. Holmes*, 7 Cow. 224.

² *Smith v. Bartholomew*, 1 Met. 276; *Warren v. Skinner*, 20 Conn. 559. That the acceptance of negotiable paper from a partner discharges the debt, when accepted in full payment, see *Thompson v. Percival*, 5 B. & Ad. 925; *Therasson v. Peterson*, 3 Keys, 636. That the acceptance of a fractional sum from one debtor does not bar the debt, the object being to release him, see *Smith v. Bartholomew*, 1 Metc. (Mass.)

276; *contra*, *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391; *supra*, §§ 831, 949.

³ *Supra*, §§ 821, 950; *Wallace v. Kelsall*, 7 M. & W. 264; *Clark v. Dinsmore*, 5 N. H. 186; see *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391.

⁴ *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed. 601; 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1101; *Leake*, 2d ed. 879; *Cooper v. Parker*, 15 C. B. 822; *Bayley v. Homan*, 3 Bing. N. C. 920; *Brown v. Perkins*, 1 Hare, 564; *Gabriel v. Dresser*, 15 C. B. 622; *Collingbourne v. Mantell*, 5 M. & W. 292; *Warren v. Skinner*, 20 Conn. 559; *Smith v. Bartholomew*, 1 Met. 276; *Russell v. Lytle*, 6 Wend. 390; *Brooklyn Bk. v. De Grauw*, 23 Wend. 342; *Anderson v. Turnpike Co.*, 16 Johns. 86; *Keeler v. Neal*, 2 Watts, 424; *Sprunberger v. Dentler*, 4 Watts, 126; *Frost v. Johnson*, 8 Ohio, 393; *Woodruff v. Dobbins*, 7 Blackf. 582; *Ballard v. Nooks*, 2 Pike, 45; *Simmons v. Hamilton*, 56 Cal. 493.

⁵ *Allen v. Harris*, 1 Ld. Ray. 122; *Reeves v. Hearne*, 1 M. & W. 323; *Masse v. Johnson*, 1 Ex. 256; *Cushing v. Wyman*, 44 Me. 121; *White v. Gray*, 68 Me. 579; *Woodward v. Miles*, 24

accept goods in place of goods agreed to be delivered to the plaintiff is no bar in an action for breach of contract, unless the goods were delivered and accepted, or unless the defendant was misled by the plaintiff's conduct, or unless there was a novation.¹ An agreement, also, to accept a mortgage as security for a debt is no bar to an action for the debt, unless the mortgage was at the time accepted, and the old contract be reconstructed on good consideration by novation.² It is no answer, also, to a suit on a note that the plaintiff agreed to receive payment by instalments, there being no part reception and consideration for delay.³—The plea must allege that the matter was accepted in satisfaction.⁴ Tender of satisfaction, after it is agreed upon, must be formally made and received, in order to be effective.⁵—It may be, however, that after an accord, the debtor may, on the faith of it, take steps which will preclude the creditor from disputing the adequacy of a tender of the thing agreed to be accepted in satisfaction.⁶ Or there may be, on sufficient consideration, a reconstruction of the entire contract, in which case the new contract takes the place of the old, by way of novation.⁷

§ 1000. A cash payment for a smaller amount may be an

N. H. 293; *Hearn v. Kiel*, 38 Penn. St. 149; *Flack v. Garland*, 8 Md. 191; *Simmons v. Clark*, 56 Ill. 96; *Hall v. Smith*, 10 Iowa, 48; *Logan v. Austin*, 1 Stew. (Ala.) 476; *Pope v. Tunstall*, 3 Pike, 209; *Overton v. Conner*, 50 Tex. 113. The satisfaction must be complete to bar a suit. *Cuxon v. Chadley*, 3 B. & C. 591; *Bragg v. Pierce*, 53 Me. 65; *Costello v. Cady*, 102 Mass. 140; *Kromer v. Heim*, 75 N. Y. 574; *Panzerbeiter v. Waydell*, 21 Hun, 161; *Spruneberger v. Dentler*, 4 Watts, 126; *Ellis v. Bitzer*, 2 Ohio, 91. That accord without satisfaction is a mere inoperative agreement, see *Spence v. Heeley*, 8 Exch. 668; *Noe v. Christie*, 51 N. Y. 270; *Young v. Fugett*, 1 Lea (Tenn.) 444.

¹ *Gabriel v. Dresser*, 15 C. B. 622; *Wray v. Milestone*, 5 M. & W. 21; *Collingbourne v. Mantell*, 5 M. & W. 289; *Bruce v. Bruce*, 4 Dana, 530. As to novation, see *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

² *Allies v. Probyn*, 2 C. M. & R. 408; but see *Kinsler v. Pope*, 5 Strobb. 126; *Morris Canal Co. v. Vanvorst*, 1 Zab. 101.

³ *McManus v. Bark*, L. R. 5 Ex. 65.

⁴ *Smith*, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 606; *Maze v. Miller*, 1 Wash. C. C. 328; *Morris Canal Co. v. Vanvorst*, 1 Zab. 101; *Sinard v. Patterson*, 3 Blackf. 354.

⁵ *Pettis v. Ray*, 12 R. I. 344.

⁶ *Keeler v. Salisbury*, 33 N. Y. 648.

⁷ See *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

Unliqui-
dated debt
for larger
amount
may be dis-
charged on
receipt of
smaller
amount in
cash.

accord and satisfaction for a larger unliquidated claim.¹ And an agreement by which a claim for unliquidated damages is suspended until the creditor does a particular act, operates to suspend such claim until such act is done.² An agreement, also, for mutual discontinuance of two cross suits for false imprisonment may operate as an accord and satisfaction.³

§ 1001. While the rule still continues to be that a creditor cannot bind himself by a simple agreement to accept a smaller sum in lieu of an ascertained debt of a larger amount, yet it is now firmly settled that "if there be any benefit, or even legal possibility of a benefit, to the creditor thrown in, that additional weight will turn the scale, and render the consideration sufficient to support the agreement."⁴ Thus, in a Connecticut case in 1880, a creditor, having brought suit on a debt of \$299, agreed, pending the litigation, to accept \$150 in full, together with the costs and expenses of the suit when ascertained. The

¹ *Supra*, §§ 521, 533, 937; *Longridge v. Dorville*, 5 B. & Ald. 117; *Watters v. Smith*, 2 B. & Ad. 889; *Haigh v. Brookes*, 10 A. & E. 309; *Wilkinson v. Byers*, 1 A. & E. 106; *Palmerton v. Huxford*, 4 Denio, 166; *Howard v. Norton*, 65 Barb. 161; *McDaniels v. Lapham*, 21 Vt. 223; *McDaniels v. Bank*, 29 Vt. 235; *Donohue v. Woodbury*, 6 Cush. 150; *Lamb v. Goodwin*, 10 Ired. 320; *Mathis v. Bryson*, 4 Jones, L. 508.

² *Stracy v. Bank*, 6 Bing. 754; *Wentworth v. Bullen*, 9 B. & C. 840.

³ *Foster v. Trull*, 12 Johns. 456; *supra*, §§ 198, 533.

⁴ *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed. 600; citing *Steinman v. Magnus*, 2 Camp. 124; 11 East, 390; *Bradley v. Gregory*, 2 Camp. 383; *Wood v. Roberts*, 2 Stark. 417; *Boothby v. Sowden*, 3 Camp. 175; *Sibree v. Tripp*, 15 M. & W. 23; and other cases cited *supra*, §

517; see *Bailey v. Cowles*, 86 Ill. 333; *State v. Story*, 57 Miss. 738. In *Couldery v. Bartrum*, L. R. 19 Ch. D. 399, *Jessel, M. R.*, thus comments on the common-law rule: "According to English common law, a creditor might accept anything in satisfaction of his debt except a less amount of money. He might take a horse, or a canary, or a tomtit if he chose, and that was accord and satisfaction; but, by a most extraordinary peculiarity of the English common law, he could not take 19s. 6d. in the pound; that was *nudum pactum*. Therefore, although the creditor might take a canary, yet, if the debtor did not give him a canary, together with his 19s. 6d., there was no accord and satisfaction; if he did, there was accord and satisfaction. That was one of the mysteries of English common law." See also *supra*, §§ 935 *et seq.*

debtor paid the \$150 and the costs, which ultimately turned out to be \$18.00. It was held that this latter item made a sufficient additional consideration to constitute a binding accord and satisfaction.¹ But the additional increment of consideration must be something appreciable.² Hence a promise by the debtor to do something he is already bound to do, will not form such additional consideration;³ nor will, in general, a merely cumulative promise.⁴ But if appreciable, no matter how slight it may be, the consideration will be sufficient to support the settlement. "The rule that the payment of a less sum of money, though agreed by the plaintiff to be received in full satisfaction of a debt exceeding that amount, shall not be so considered in contemplation of law, is technical, and not very well supported by reason. Courts, therefore, have departed from it upon slight distinctions."⁵ Extension of time is always a good consideration.⁶

¹ *Mitchell v. Wheaton*, 46 Conn. 315.

² *Supra*, § 519; *Buddicum v. Kirke*, 3 Cranch, 293; *Keeler v. Neal*, 2 Watts, 424; *Davis v. Noakes*, 3 J. J. Marsh. 494.

³ *Supra*, §§ 500, 720.

⁴ *Supra*, § 498.

⁵ *Nelson, J., Kellogg v. Richards*, 14 Wend. 116; and in *Johnston v. Brannan*, 5 Johns. 271, the rule was spoken of as "rigid and unreasonable." See to same effect, comments of Dewey, J., in *Brooks v. White*, 2 Metc. 285; and in *Smith*, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 608. In *Harper v. Graham*, 20 Ohio, 105, the payment of an attorney's fee of \$100, was held to supply the necessary make-weight.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 517 *et seq.*; *Wormer v. Waterloo Works*, 50 Iowa, 262. In *Goddard v. O'Brien*, L. R. 9 Q. B. D. 37, it was held by Grove, J., and Huddleston, B., that a cheque paid and accepted in discharge of a debt for a larger amount is a good satisfaction and discharge of the whole debt. It was held by both judges, that *Cumber v. Wane*

had been overruled so far as concerns cases in which "any benefit, or even any legal possibility of benefit to the creditor is thrown in." And Cockburn, C. J., was quoted as saying in *Bridges v. Garrett*, L. R. 5 C. P. 451: "If, however, payment is made by cheque, and the cheque is duly honored, that is a payment in cash." In *Mechanics' Bank v. Huston*, 11 Weekly Notes, 389 (Sup. Ct. Penn. 1882), Sharswood, C. J., giving the opinion of the court, said: "It may be considered as now well settled in this state, that payment of part of an undisputed debt after it is due, though accepted in full, is not a good accord and satisfaction. *Wentz v. De Haven*, 1 S. & R. 312, which decided that in Pennsylvania, a mortgage may be released by a writing not under seal and without consideration, has been expressly overruled. *Whitehill v. Wilson*, 3 Penrose & Watts, 405; *Kennedy v. Ware*, 1 Barr, 445; *Kidder v. Kidder*, 9 Casey, 268. The opinion expressed in *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 397; and *Hall v. Warwick*, 2

§ 1002. The fact that a payment of a smaller sum is made in cash will add the increment of consideration which is requisite to sustain an accord and satisfaction.¹ Change of place of payment, also, may have the same effect.²

Anticipa-
tion of time
or change
of place
may be
sufficient.

American Law Journal, 186, must fall with *Wentz v. De Haven*. It is too clear for argument, that if a release of a debt not under seal must have a consideration to support it, then payment of part of an acknowledged indebtedness can be no consideration for a release of the remainder.

"While this is so it is equally well settled that the acceptance of a collateral thing, without regard to its value, is a good accord and satisfaction. In the absence of fraud the courts never inquire into the adequacy of the consideration, of an agreement. The promissory note of the debtor is such a collateral thing. It is a decided advantage to the creditor in two ways. First, the greater facility of a recovery upon it. It requires no evidence of consideration in the first instance. It imports *prima facie* a sufficient consideration. Second, it may be disposed of in the market at once before it falls due, and the *bona fide* purchaser of it takes it clear of all equities between the original parties. Thus the creditor may often find that such a note for part of his debt is of great and immediate advantage to him by raising the money upon it. *Cumber v. Wane*, 1 Strange, 426, is relied on as opposed to this. It is not stated in the facts, nor in the opinion of the court, that the note in that case was negotiable, though it is so spoken of in the argument of counsel. Indeed, Chief Justice Pratt says: 'If 5*l.* be (as is admitted) no satisfaction for 15*l.*, why is a simple contract to pay 5*l.* a satisfaction for another simple contract of three times the

value?' not adverting to any change in the nature of the security. Mr. Smith in his note on this case remarks that 'the main point, viz., that a security of equal degree for a smaller sum, if it present no easier or better remedy, cannot be pleaded in an action for the larger one, has frequently been affirmed since the decision of *Cumber v. Wane*,' where he evidently confines it to the case where the new security presents no easier or better remedy. He adds 'that the doctrine laid down by Pratt, C. J., in delivering the judgment of the court, has not been to its full extent sustained.' He refers then to some subsequent determinations, among them *Sibree v. Tripp*, 15 Mees. & Wels. 23, in which it was held that a negotiable security may operate, if so given and taken, in satisfaction of a debt of greater amount, the circumstance of negotiability making it in fact a different thing, and more advantageous than the original debt, which was not negotiable. 1 Smith's Leading Cases, 440, 442. To the same effect is *Curlewis v. Clark*, 3 Exch. Rep. 375. The same principle was distinctly recognized in *Savage v. Everman*, 20 P. F. Smith, 315."

¹ *Supra*, § 504; *Brown v. Stackpole*, 9 N. H. 478; *Austin v. Dorwin*, 21 Vt. 39; *Reed v. Bartlett*, 19 Pick. 273; *Brooks v. White*, 2 Metc. (Mass.) 283; *Rose v. Hall*, 26 Conn. 392; *Kellogg v. Richards*, 14 Wend. 116; *Milliken v. Brown*, 1 Rawle, 391; *Smith v. Brown*, 3 Hawks, 580; *Arnold v. Park*, 8 Bush, 3; *Spann v. Baltzell*, 1 Fla. 302.

² *Jones v. Perkins*, 29 Miss. 141.

§ 1003. An agreement by which a lesser sum, with additional security, is accepted in discharge of a prior debt, is an accord and satisfaction, and operates when the new security, being accepted as adequate, is received by the creditor. The consideration, in such case, is sufficient. The debtor obtains reduction and extension; the creditor obtains security which he did not before possess.¹ To constitute accord and satisfaction, however, the creditor must accept the new promise with its security; and if he refuses to do so, the original claim may be pursued.² It is here that the element of novation comes in. If a new contract takes the place of the old, the old, if the consideration be sufficient, is superseded by the new.³ But the mere agreement to take a less sum is on its face without consideration. If, however, a new security is proposed by the debtor and accepted by the creditor, this operates as a satisfaction when the agreement is that it should be so accepted.⁴ And it is hard to see why an agreement to take such a security, followed by a tender of the

An agreement to take a lesser amount secured is an accord and satisfaction when security is received.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 574, 953 *et seq.*; *Sibree v. Tripp*, 15 M. & W. 23; 1 *Smith's Lead. Cas.* *444; *Hinckley v. Arey*, 27 Me. 362; *Billings v. Vanderbeck*, 23 Barb. 546; *Douglass v. White*, 3 Barb. Ch. 621; *Kellogg v. Richards*, 14 Wend. 118; *Frisbie v. Larned*, 21 Wend. 450; *Reid v. Hibbard*, 6 Wis. 175; *Mason v. Campbell*, 27 Minn. 54; *Sanders v. Bank*, 13 Ala. 353; *Pope v. Tunstall*, 3 Pike, 209. See discussion in 1 *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed. 598 *et seq.*

² Story on Cont. § 982 *b*; 2 *Parsons on Cont.* 681-3; *Russell v. Lytle*, 6 Wend. 390; *Hawley v. Foote*, 19 Wend. 516; *Kromer v. Heim*, 75 N. Y. 574; *Hearn v. Kiehl*, 38 Penn. St. 147; *Keen v. Vaughan*, 48 Penn. St. 477. See *Young v. Jones*, 64 Me. 563; *White v. Gray*, 68 Me. 579; *Pettis v. Ray*, 12 R. I. 344; *Frost v. Johnson*, 8 Ohio, 393.

That acceptance as a full discharge of a promissory note or endorsement of a

third person, even for a less sum, may constitute accord and satisfaction, see 1 *Smith's L. C.* 7th Am. ed. 605; *Brooks v. White*, 2 Meto. 283; *Boyd v. Hitchcock*, 20 Johns. 76; *Booth v. Smith*, 3 Wend. 66; *New York State Bank v. Fletcher*, 5 Wend. 85; *Kellogg v. Richards*, 14 Wend. 116; *Frisbie v. Larned*, 21 Wend. 451; *Mason v. Campbell*, 27 Minn. 54; *Graham v. Morrow*, 40 Ga. 487; *Sanders v. Bank*, 13 Ala. 353; and see cases cited *supra*, §§ 953 *et seq.*

³ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.* That a mortgage for a less sum will be an accord and satisfaction, see *Keeler v. Salisbury*, 27 Barb. 485. Whether a security is accepted as *security*, or as *payment*, is elsewhere considered. See *supra*, §§ 953 *et seq.*

⁴ *Evans v. Powis*, 1 Ex. 601; *Hall v. Flockton*, 16 Q. B. 1039; and cases cited *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*, 996 *et seq.*

security, should not have the same effect when the security consists of a guarantee by a third party. The debtor says, "If you will take two-thirds, I will give you B.'s note." The creditor says, "On consideration of B.'s note, I will take two-thirds." This has all the elements of a binding contract, and substitutes the new agreement for the old.¹ Hence, the reception of a cheque by a third party for a lesser amount, accompanied by a receipt in full, is an accord and satisfaction.² But the new agreement, in such case, "must create a binding contract, supported by a sufficient consideration, and giving a right of action; otherwise it would form no satisfaction of the original debt without an actual performance."³ Hence, an executory contract, by way of compromise, to discharge a disputed claim, by giving the debtor's promissory note for a sum less than the amount actually due, is not a bar to the original demand, although the note has been tendered to the creditor, if it has not been accepted.⁴ To constitute a bar, there must be some additional element of consideration.⁵

§ 1004. It has been already stated that the acceptance of a third party as security on a new contract, before breach, constitutes novation, by which the old agreement is merged in the new.⁶ And in any view, the security of a third party received for a portion of the debt, is a sufficient consideration for the release of the residue.⁷ In such cases, however, the plea must

¹ *Jenness v. Lane*, 26 Me. 475; *Lee v. Oppenheimer*, 32 Me. 253; *Babcock v. Hawkins*, 23 Vt. 561; *Guild v. Butler*, 127 Mass. 386; *Boyd v. Hitchcock*, 20 Johns. 76; *Christie v. Craige*, 20 Penn. St. 430; *Jones v. Perkins*, 29 Miss. 142; *Bradshaw v. Davis*, 12 Tex. 336; *Whitsitt v. Clayton*, Sup. Ct. Colorado, 1881, 12 Rep. 486.

² *Guild v. Butler*, 127 Mass. 386; *supra*, §§ 935, 953.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 880; citing *Case v. Barber*, T. Raym. 450; *Lynn v. Bruce*, 2 H. Bl. 317; *Henderson v. Stobart*, 5 Ex. 99; *McManus v. Bark*, L. R. 5 Ex. 65; *Plevins v. Downing*, L. R. 1 C. P.

D. 220. To same effect see *Bragg v. Pierce*, 53 Me. 65; *Costello v. Cady*, 102 Mass. 140; *Clarke v. Hawkins*, 5 R. I. 219.

⁴ *Cushing v. Wyman*, 44 Me. 121; *Miller v. Hatch*, 72 Me. 481; *Clifton v. Litchfield*, 106 Mass. 34; *Blake v. Blake*, 110 Mass. 202; and cases cited *supra*, § 997.

⁵ See *supra*, § 1001; *infra*, § 1032.

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

⁷ *Kemp v. Watt*, 15 M. & W. 672; *Henderson v. Stobart*, 5 Ex. 99; see *Sard v. Rhoads*, 1 M. & W. 153; *Griffiths v. Owen*, 13 M. & W. 63.

aver, and it must be satisfactorily proved, that the substitution was intended as an extinguishment.¹

§ 1005. An agreement by a creditor to take a fractional payment of his debt, in consideration of other creditors making a like reduction, may be supported as an accord and satisfaction on the same principles. There is an adequate consideration to sustain such an agreement, *viz.*, the reciprocal forbearance of creditors, by which a fair division of the insolvent debtor's estate is secured, and he is protected from undue pressure.² Whether the agreement of composition is *per se* a satisfaction, or whether to make it, such payment is a condition precedent, depends upon the construction of the agreement. "At common law, where a body of creditors accept a composition, they may agree to take the promises of the debtor, with or without a surety, in satisfaction of the debts, or they may agree that payment shall be a condition precedent, and that if the debtor pays the composition at a certain time and place, the creditors will accept that composition in satisfaction of their debts. It is a question of construction of the instrument of arrangement."³ In other words, an agreement may be so couched as to make the assent of a specific number of creditors to the com-

When other creditors release, composition may be satisfactory.

¹ Ibid.; Bayley v. Homan, 3 Bing. N. C. 920; Collingbourne v. Mantell, 5 M. & W. 289; Harris v. Reynolds, 7 Q. B. 71; see 1 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 612; Babcock v. Hawkins, 23 Vt. 561.

² *Supra*, § 517; Boyd v. Hind, 1 H. & N. 947; Good v. Cheeseman, 2 B. & Ad. 328. In *Couldery v. Bartrum*, L. R. 19 Ch. D. 394, Jessel, M. R., said: "It was felt to be a very absurd thing that the creditors could not bind themselves to take less than the amount of their debts. There might be friends of the debtor who would come forward and pay something toward the debts; or it might be that the debtor was in such a position that if the creditors took less than their debts he would have something over for himself, and would exert himself to pay the dividend; whereas,

if the creditors did not, they would get nothing, or less than nothing, if they incurred costs in endeavoring to get payment. Therefore, it was necessary to bind the creditors; and as every debtor had not a stock of canary birds, or tomtits, or rubbish of that kind, to add to his dividend, it was felt desirable to bind the creditors in a sensible way, by saying that if they all agreed, there should be a consideration imported from the agreement constituting an addition to the dividend, so as to make the agreement no longer *nudum pactum*, but an agreement made for valuable considerations, then there would be satisfaction." See for further citation, *supra*, § 1001.

³ Mellish, L. J., *Hatton in re*, L. R. 7 Ch. 726; adopted Leake, 2d ed. 881

position, coupled with a promise by the debtor to pay a designated dividend, a satisfaction by itself; or it may be so couched as to make the satisfaction conditioned on payment. In the latter case, if the payment be not made, the original indebtedness may be sued on.¹ And if negotiable paper given under such a composition, the satisfaction being conditioned on payment, be dishonored on maturity, the creditor is entitled to fall back on his original claim.²—Where “a debtor has induced a number of his creditors to accept a composition amounting to less than their entire demand,” “such an agreement, if entered into with the debtor by a number of creditors, each acting on the faith of the engagement of the others, will be binding upon them, for each in that case has the undertakings of the rest as a consideration for his own undertaking.”³ The same rule applies to an agreement to give time.⁴ But the agreement ceases to bind a creditor who is afterwards refused the benefit held out to him in the proposed composition.⁵ And when subscriptions are dependent upon all creditors joining, they cannot be enforced if all creditors refuse to join.⁶ The validity of the composition depends on a correlative agreement by other creditors to proportionally abate.⁷

§ 1006. Goods or labor may be taken in satisfaction of a debt, and when this is agreed on by the parties, and the thing agreed on is received, the accord and satisfaction are complete. In such case the question of adequacy is not at issue, supposing that there is no taint of imposition or unfairness.⁸ But services rendered,

Goods or
labor may
be taken in
satisfaction

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 882; *Edwards v. Coombe*, L. R. 7 C. P. 519; *Newell v. Van Praagh*, L. R. 9 C. P. 96; *Edwards v. Hancher*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 111.

² *Edwards v. Hancher*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 111. See as to payment under such circumstances, *supra*, §§ 954 *et seq.*

³ 1 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 600, citing *Reay v. White*, 3 Tyrwh. 596, 1 C. & M. 748; *Cutter v. Reynolds*, 8 B. Mon. 596; and see cases cited *supra*, §§ 379, 527 *et seq.*

⁴ *Good v. Cheeseman*, 2 B. & Ad. 328.

⁵ *Garrard v. Woolner*, 8 Bing. 258.

⁶ *Reay v. Richardson*, 2 C. M. & R. 422.

⁷ *Van Rensselaar v. Aiken*, 44 N. Y. 126.

⁸ *Supra*, § 504; Leake, 2d ed. 878; *Metc. on Cont.* 191; *Curlewis v. Clark*, 8 Ex. 375; *Reed v. Bartlett*, 19 Pick. 273; *Eaton v. Lincoln*, 13 Mass. 424; *Blinn v. Chester*, 5 Day, 359; *Boyd v. Hitchcock*, 20 Johns. 76; *Kellogg v. Richards*, 14 Wend. 116; *Deweese v. Cheeke*, 35 Ind. 514; *Jones v. Bullitt*, 2 Littell, 40.

to work a discharge, must be something to be done in consequence of the agreement of satisfaction; not something previously done.¹ And if the services are liquidated by the parties at a sum less than the debt, they are not a satisfaction unless there be some additional consideration.²—The accord in such cases, to be a bar, must be executed in accordance with its terms.³—When a thing incapable of exact liquidation, and susceptible of various estimates as to its value, is given in payment of a debt, the rule that a debt is only discharged by a full money payment does not apply. The thing given, if valued by the parties as an equivalent for the whole debt, must be so considered.⁴—The payee and holder of an overdue note, an aged woman, agreed with the maker, that in consideration of what he had done for her and furnished her, and in consideration of his paying her doctor's bill and funeral expenses, and putting head-stones at her grave and that of her husband, he should have the note, which, however, she was to retain as security. It was held, on a suit by the payee's administrator against the maker, that the agreement, being performed, constituted an accord and satisfaction.⁵

§ 1007. A creditor who elects to take judgment for the fractional part of a debt, may bar himself from the recovery of the remainder.⁶ There is in such cases a merger of the debt in the judgment.⁷

Part payment by way of judgment and execution may satisfy.

§ 1008. We have already noticed the controversy as to whether a payment by a stranger operates to discharge a debt.⁸ The same difference of opinion exists on this point as exists on the cognate question whether a stranger can sue on a contract.⁹ In Eng-

Payment by a stranger may be accord and satisfaction.

¹ *Stead v. Poyer*, 1 C. B. 782; *Goodrich v. Stanley*, 24 Conn. 613.

² *Howard v. Norton*, 65 Barb. 161.

³ *Costello v. Cady*, 102 Mass. 140. See on this topic 1 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 605.

⁴ *Brooks v. White*, 2 Met. 285; *Watkinson v. Ingleby*, 5 Johns. 386; *Musgrove v. Gibbs*, 1 Dall. 217; and see *Perkins v. Lockwood*, 100 Mass. 249.

⁵ *Ridlon v. Davis*, 51 Vt. 457.

⁶ *Supra*, § 936; *Baker v. Stinchfield*, 57 Me. 363; *Smith v. Jones*, 15 Johns. 229; *Willard v. Sperry*, 16 Johns. 121; *Ingraham v. Hall*, 11 S. & R. 78; and cases cited in Wh. on Ev. § 788.

⁷ See *supra*, §§ 687, 776; Wh. on Ev. § 788.

⁸ *Supra*, § 942.

⁹ See *supra*, §§ 784 *et seq.*

land and in several states in this country, none but the parties to a contract can sue on it, and none but the parties can extinguish it.—On the other hand, we have rulings in this country that a payment by a stranger extinguishes a debt; and we are told that an accord and satisfaction moving from a stranger, or person having no pecuniary interest in the subject matter, if accepted in satisfaction of the debt, constitutes a good defence in an action against the original debtor.¹ But to constitute an extinction of a debt, it is proper that the assent of the debtor should be given.² In New York it was held in an early case, that payment by a stranger is not a satisfaction, and this case is still unreversed.³ But if the debtor assent, then a case of accord and satisfaction is made out.⁴

¹ Day, J., *Harvey v. Tama Co.*, 53 Exch. 845; *Leavitt v. Morrow*, 6 Ohio, Iowa, 228; citing *Leavitt v. Morrow*, 6 Ohio St. 71.

² See *supra*, § 942.

³ “*Grymes v. Blofield*, Cro. Eliz. 541, that payment of a debt by a stranger is not a satisfaction, has been much criticized and materially limited by subsequent cases in England and elsewhere. *Jones v. Broadhurst*, 9 C. B. 173; *Simpson v. Eggington*, 10

Exch. 845; *Leavitt v. Morrow*, 6 Ohio, 71. But it has been followed in this state, in *Clow v. Borst*, 6 Johns. 37; and has not been authoritatively overruled; and we need not now determine whether it should any longer be regarded as authority.” *Andrews, J., Wellington v. Kelly*, 84 N. Y. 547; and see *Patillo v. Smith*, 61 Ga. 265.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*, 996 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

SET-OFF.

Set-off a processual right, and governed by <i>lex fori</i> , § 1009.	Debts must be between the same parties, § 1021.
No set-off at common law, § 1010.	Personal debts cannot be set off against representatives, § 1022.
Set-off may be specially stipulated, § 1011.	Agent's debt cannot be set off against principal, § 1023.
By statute extended to mutual debts, § 1012.	Surety may avail himself of debts due his principal, § 1024.
Equitable claims may be set off, § 1013.	After assignment, debt due assignee may be set off on suit by him, § 1025.
Set-off does not extinguish debt, but only affects remedy, § 1014.	Distinctive rule as to insolvent and bankrupt assignees and receivers, § 1026.
Use of on trial is optional, § 1015.	Principal's debt may be set off against agent, § 1027.
Practice as to counter-claims, 1016.	So as to partners, § 1028.
Only actionable debts can be set off, § 1017.	Unliquidated damages not admissible as set-off, though admissible as counter-claims, § 1029.
To set-off barred by statute of limitations, statute must be specially pleaded, § 1018.	No set-off admissible in proceedings <i>in rem</i> , § 1030.
Debts not due at date of suit cannot be set off, § 1019.	
Debts must be due when offered at trial, § 1020.	

§ 1009. SET-OFF is a processual right, and is governed by the *lex fori*;¹ and in England, a foreign statute of set-off, going merely to the remedy, will not be regarded as affecting a debt distinctively subject to that law.² It is submitted, however, that when a

Set-off is a processual right, and is governed by *lex fori*.

¹ *Greene v. Darling*, 5 Mason, 201; 646; see *Macfarlane v. Norris*, 2 B. & S. 783; Wh. Confl. of L. § 788. That set-off when agreed to is equivalent to payment, see *supra*, § 964. That set-off may be appropriated by agreement to debts excluded by statute, see *supra*, § 965.

² *Meyer v. Dresser*, 16 C. B. N. S.

foreign statute of set-off goes to extinguish a debt subject to it, it should have extra-territorial force.—As a matter of principle, as has already been seen, all equities that go to the substance of a debt are to be determined by the law of the creditor's domicil.¹—As far as concerns conflict as to terms of set-off, the law that rules is the *lex fori* at the time of suit.²

§ 1010. At common law there could be no set-off, unless by special agreement, between parties mutually indebted. Mere mutuality of debts was formerly no ground for set-off, unless there were special circumstances connecting the debts, so that one appeared to have been incurred in consideration of the other.³ An agreement, however, for set-off, it has always been held, may be inferred from the contract between the parties.⁴ Thus where an employer does for himself, with the assent of the contractor, part of a work given out by the contract, the price of this work so done is to be deducted from the contract total price.⁵ It is understood, also, in the negotiations between a principal and an agent, the agent is entitled to set off his commissions against the money collected by him.⁶ Where, also, there is an understanding that an operative should do certain work and find the materials, and it is agreed subsequently that the employer is to find part of the materials, this sustains a set-off by the employer of the materials supplied.⁷—In the old practice, courts of equity took a larger view than courts of law in requiring set-offs to be allowed to all demands in which they relate as forming part of a continuous mutual indebtedness.⁸ But ordinarily a court of equity will not interpose when there is an adequate remedy at law.⁹ Nor will it tolerate assignments made for the mere purpose of enabling a set-off to be interposed.¹⁰

¹ *Supra*, § 843.

² *Jordan v. Bank*, 74 N. Y. 467.

³ 2 Smith's L. C. 7th ed. 293 *et seq.*; 772.

Leake, 2d ed. § 1001, citing *Rawson v.*

Samuel, 1 Cr. & Ph. 161; *Best v. Hill*,

L. R. 8 C. P. 10; see *Raymond v.*

Green, 12 Neb. 215.

⁴ See *infra*, § 1011.

⁵ *Turner v. Diaper*, 2 M. & G. 241.

⁶ *Dale v. Sollet*, 4 Burr. 2133.

⁷ *Newton v. Forster*, 12 M. & W.

772.

⁸ *Story's Eq. Jur.* 12th ed. § 1434.

⁹ *Middleton v. Pollock*, L. R. 20 Eq.

33; *Wolcott v. Jones*, 4 Allen, 367.

¹⁰ *London Bank v. Narraway*, L. R. 15 Eq. 93.

§ 1011. Agreements for mutual set-offs are common in certain classes of contracts, and this is generally the case with contracts of partnership.¹ In con-
 tracts of service, also, it is frequently provided that damage done by breakage or otherwise to the employer's property by the employee shall be set off against the wages.² In building contracts, also, it is frequently stipulated that from the contract price is to be deducted any loss accruing to the employer by the contractor's laches.³ And a reciprocal understanding as to mutual credit will be sustained by a court of equity in the face of intermediate insolvency of one of the parties.⁴

Set-off may be specially stipulated.

§ 1012. In England, the right of set-off in all cases of mutual debts was established by the statute 2 Geo. II. c. 22, s. 13, and was extended by the statute 8 Geo. II. c. 24, s. 4, to cover mutual debts "of a different nature," "unless in cases where either of the said debts shall accrue by reason of a penalty contained in any bond or specialty, and in all cases where either the debt for which the action shall be brought or the debt intended to be set off against the same shall accrue by reason of any such penalty, the debt intended to be set off shall be pleaded in bar, in which plea shall be shown how much is truly and justly due on either side; and, in case the plaintiff shall recover in any such action or suit, judgment shall be entered for no more than shall appear to be truly and justly due to the plaintiff, after one debt being set against the other as aforesaid."⁵ Statutes authorizing set-offs exist in all jurisdictions in the United States, though usually without the limitation as to penalties, which with us would be applied without specific statutory prescription.⁶—Under the English statute the defendant is entitled to plead a set-off though he

By statute set-off extended to all mutual debts.

¹ *Kinnersley v. Hossack*, 2 Taunt. 170. *Hurlburt v. Ins. Co.*, 2 Sumn. 471. See *supra*, § 1010.

² *Le Noir v. Bristow*, 4 Camp. 134; *Cleworth v. Pickford*, 7 M. & W. 314.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1003.

⁴ *Jones v. St. John's Coll.*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 115.

⁵ As to set-offs in suits by the United States, see *Schaumburg v. U. S.*, 103 U. S. 667.

⁶ *Greene v. Darling*, 5 Mason, 201;

contracted to sell for ready money.¹—In this country the party for whose benefit a suit is brought is made in several states subject to set-off by statute; and the equitable ownership of debts is thus made subject to claims specifically applicable to it.²

§ 1013. Under the older English practice an injunction could be granted to restrain a suit to which there was an equitable set-off.³ At present, under the recent judicature act, the exclusive mode of taking advantage of an equitable set-off as a defence is by plea.⁴ This is the usual practice in this country.⁵ We have an illustration of this rule in a Pennsylvania case,⁶ in which it was held that in an action for the price of cattle, the defendant may give in evidence damage sustained by him by reason of the plaintiff not having delivered to him certain sheep purchased by him in the same transaction of the plaintiff.⁷—It has been held in Alabama that a mortgagor of personal property, after there has been default in payment of the debt for which the mortgage has been given, may, on producing evidence of a debt from the mortgagee to a third party purchased by him (the

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 1005; *Eland v. Karr*, 1 East, 375; *Clarke v. Fell*, 4 B. & Ad. 404; see *Fletcher ex parte*, L. R. 6 C. D. 350.

² *Sheldon v. Kendall*, 7 Cush. 217; *Com. v. Bank*, 11 Metc. 129; *Wolf v. Beales*, 6 S. & R. 244; *Ward v. Martin*, 3 Monr. 18; *Nickerson v. Gilliam*, 29 Mo. 456; see *Devine v. Edwards*, 101 Ill. 138. Payment by A. of the debt of B., without B.'s consent, cannot be allowed as a set-off in a suit by B. against A. *Patillo v. Smith*, 61 Ga. 265. See *supra*, §§ 942, 1008.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 1004; *Kingsford v. Swinford*, 28 L. J. C. 413; *Gumpertz v. Pooley*, 4 Drew. 448.

⁴ *Kemp v. Tucker*, L. R. 8 Ch. 369.

⁵ *Hannay v. Pell*, 3 E. D. Smith, 432; *Black v. Whitall*, 1 Stockt. 572; *Wray v. Furniss*, 27 Ala. 471; *Graves v.*

Hull, 27 Miss. 419. But courts of equity will be governed by the rules as to mutuality, which, as we will presently see, are imposed by courts of law. ² Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 315; *Duncan v. Lyon*, 3 Johns. Ch. 351; *King v. Diehl*, 9 S. & R. 409; *Lehr v. Taylor*, 91 Penn. St. 381; *Gibbs v. Cunningham*, 4 Md. Ch. 322; *Cincinnati Bk. v. Hemingray*, 34 Oh. St. 381; *Lockwood v. Beckwith*, 6 Mich. 168; *Tuscumbia R. R. v. Rhodes*, 8 Ala. 206; *McKinley v. Winston*, 19 Ala. 301; *Cave v. Webb*, 22 Ala. 588; *Simmons v. Williams*, 27 Ala. 507.

⁶ *Shaw v. Badger*, 12 S. & R. 275.

⁷ That in Pennsylvania the doctrines of courts of equity, in respect to set-off, have been adopted in common law practice, see *Troubat & Haly's Prac.* (Brightly's ed.) § 47.

mortgagor), enjoin the foreclosure of the mortgage, the mortgagee being insolvent.¹

§ 1014. That a set-off does not extinguish the debt, but only affects the remedy, is shown by numerous rulings.

Thus a tender, as we have seen, is not good if limited to the defendant's indebtedness after deducting the set-off.²—A lien for a specific mortgage debt continues, notwithstanding that the lien creditor is indebted independently to the lien debtor for an amount exceeding the lien.³—Nor can a set-off be used to cancel a forfeiture of a real right.⁴

Set-off does not extinguish debt but only affects remedy.

§ 1015. A defendant having a claim (not consisting of part payment) against the plaintiff, is not bound, according to the English practice, to introduce it as a set-off. He may reserve it for a cross-action,

Use of set-off on trial is optional.

or he may keep it as a defence to a subsequent suit by the same plaintiff, or "he may plead it to an action upon a judgment, although the debt accrued before the commencement of the original action."⁵ The question is whether, by the *lex fori*, the using the set-off is obligatory. Where it consists of a part payment, the weight of authority is that it ought to be offered on trial of the debt claimed to be partially paid:⁶ though it may be otherwise as to set-offs which are purely equitable, or consist of counter-claims.⁷—When a creditor becomes insolvent after obtaining judgment, equity may compel the allowance of any set-off the debtor may have against him, though it existed at the time suit was brought, provided it was not adjudicated against in the suit.⁸

¹ *Martin v. Mohr*, 56 Ala. 221. But a claim recoverable only by an action of account, or by a bill in equity, cannot, it is said, be introduced as a set-off. *Russell v. Metler*, 54 Penn. St. 154.

² *Supra*, § 978.

³ *Clark v. Fell*, 4 B. & Ad. 404.

⁴ *Johnson v. Lyttle*, L. R. 5 C. D. 692; see *Leake*, 2d ed. 1004; *infra*, § 1030.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1005, citing Lord

Campbell, L. C., in *Jenner v. Morris*, 3 D. F. & J. 54.

⁶ Wh. on Ev. § 789, and cases there cited; *supra*, §§ 936-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*; *Davis v. Hedges*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 687; *Davenport v. Hubbard*, 46 Vt. 200; *Bridge v. Gray*, 14 Pick. 55; *McEwen v. Bigelow*, 40 Mich. 215; *supra*, §§ 936-7.

⁸ *Chicago R. R. v. Field*, 86 Ill. 270.

Practice
as to
counter-
claims.

§ 1016. In England, by an order of the supreme court of judicature, a defendant is entitled to set up as "counter-claim" any right or claim against the plaintiff, "whether such set-off or counter-claim sound in damages or not." If there is a balance due the defendant, judgment may be given for such balance. "Counter-claim," under this order, is distinguished from set-off in covering an independent liability from the plaintiff to the defendant, and in permitting judgment to be entered for either party as the merits may require.¹—Costs are proportioned to the balance found, and not to the amount of claim proved.²

§ 1017. Only actionable claims can be introduced either as set-offs or as counter-claims.³ Hence a debt contracted in

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 1006; *Mostyn v. West Mostyn Coal Co.*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 145; *Harris v. Gamble*, L. R. 6 C. D. 748; *Crowe v. Barnicot*, L. R. 6 C. D. 753.

² *Staples v. Young*, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 324. As to practice, see further, *Newell v. Bank*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 496; *Norris v. Beesley*, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 80; *Young v. Kitchen*, L. R. 3 C. P. D. 127. As to counter-claim in this country, see *Wacker v. Straub*, 88 Penn. St. 32; *Ritchie v. Hayward*, 71 Mo. 560; *Selleck v. Griswold*, 49 Wis. 39; *Delaney v. McDonald*, 47 Wis. 408; *Read v. Tioga Co.*, 66 Ind. 21; *Mobile, etc., R. v. Clanton*, 59 Ala. 392; see *infra*, § 1299. In *Lebanon Bk. v. Karmany*, Sup. Ct. Penn. 1881, 12 Rep. 540, it was held that to an action against a national bank for the penalty imposed of double the amount of interest obtained on a usurious loan, the defendant could not set off the note. The court said: "The plaintiff's claim is not within the defalcation act, which applies where the parties are 'indebted to each other upon bonds, bills, bargains, promises, accounts, or the like.' It arises from the defendant's violation of a statute remedial and

penal, which gives the borrower the right to recover, for the two-fold purpose of compensation and example. *Overholt v. Bank*, 82 Penn. St. 490; S. C., *Thomp. Nat. Bk. Cas.* 883. It was decided in *Barnet v. Bank*, 8 Otto, 555; S. C., *Browne's Nat. Bk. Cas.* 18, that in an action on a bill of exchange the defendant could not set off a claim for twice the amount of illegal interest he had paid the bank; that his remedy for the wrong was a penal suit, and he could have redress in no other mode or form of proceeding. That set-off is not allowed in such action is well settled. When the prescribed action for recovery is debt, or action in the nature of debt, it gives no right of set-off. After the plaintiff shall have obtained judgment, if the defendant have a judgment against the plaintiff in another case, there is power in the court to order one judgment to be set off against the other, governed by equitable principles. But such principles do not apply in a suit when the claim is in the nature of a penalty for violation of a statute so as to allow defalcation."

³ See *Libby v. Hopkins*, Sup. Ct. U. S. 1882, 25 Alb. L. J. 153; *Messmore v. Larson*, 86 Ill. 268. In *Garrison v.*

infancy, and thus barred, cannot be introduced as a set-off without proof of ratification;¹ nor can a debt barred by the statute of limitations,² nor debts not actionable under the statute of frauds.³—It is no objection to a debt as a set-off that a suit has been brought on it which is still pending;⁴ nor that a judgment has been entered on such claim in the defendant's favor, provided he is the beneficial owner.⁵ But the judgment must be virtually between the same parties.⁶—Hence a claim to be thus set off must be owned absolutely by the defendant. It cannot be borrowed by him for the occasion.⁷

Only actionable debts can be set off.

§ 1018. When a debt barred by the statute of limitations is put in evidence by the defence, the plaintiff, according to the English practice, must specially plead the statute in reply, if the object is to dispute the debt on that ground.⁸ The set-off is good, so far as the statute is concerned, if the debt was not barred at the time of the commencement of the suit.⁹ The statute is met in such cases in the same way that it is met when it is set up by plea. The defendant may show that the plaintiff acknowledged the debt which is the subject of the set-off.¹⁰—The date of items in a set-off is not conclusive, but may be explained by parol.¹¹

To set-off barred by statute of limitations, statute must be specially pleaded.

Paul, 1 Penn. Sup. Ct. 380, it was said: "It is certainly well settled law that a defendant's right to a set-off must be perfect at the time the suit is instituted. We know of no doctrine of equitable set-off which dispenses with this rule. A surety has an action against his principal before being actually compelled to pay the money, because he could file a bill in equity for indemnity. But there can be no action for contribution between co-sureties, either at law or in equity, until the surety is obliged to pay the debt." Per curiam.

¹ Rawley v. Rawley, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 460.

² *Infra*, § 1018.

³ Sennett v. Johnson, 9 Beav. 335.

⁴ Peabody v. Southgate, 5 Pick. 1;

Braynard v. Fisher, 6 Pick. 355; Collins v. Allen, 12 Wend. 356; though see Lock v. Miller, 3 St. & P. 13.

⁵ Satterlee v. Ten Eyck, 7 Cow. 480; Turner v. Satterlee, 7 Cow. 481; Metzgar v. Metzgar, 1 Rawle, 227; Bell v. Cowgill, 1 Ashm. 8.

⁶ Ramsey's App., 2 Watts, 223.

⁷ Gilman v. Van Slyck, 7 Cow. 469; *infra*, § 1021.

⁸ Leake, 2d ed. 1007; Chapple v. Durston, 1 C. & J. 1; see Reed v. Marshall, 90 Penn. St. 345.

⁹ Walker v. Clements, 15 Q. B. 1046; Taylor v. Gould, 57 Penn. St. 152.

¹⁰ Rawley v. Rawley, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 460.

¹¹ McEwing v. James, 36 Oh. St. 152; Wh. on Ev. § 977.

§ 1019. A debt from the plaintiff to the defendant, not due until after the beginning of the suit, cannot be received in evidence by way of set-off.¹ Such a debt cannot be introduced under a plea *puis darrein continuance*,² even in cases where the liability was incurred prior to suit, if it has not accrued prior to suit.³ Nor can it be used as a basis for an injunction.⁴ The fact, however, that the set-off did not become due until after the debt to which it is offered as a set-off, does not in any way affect its admissibility.⁵

§ 1020. The set-off must not only have been due at the time of the commencement of the suit, but must continue due at the time it is offered in evidence. If it has been paid,⁶ or if it has been assigned to another party,⁷ it cannot be received in evidence. It has *a fortiori* been held that a set-off must be in force as such when pleaded.⁸—The same rule exists with regard to counter-claims.—In a case before the supreme court of Pennsylvania, in 1881, the defendants to an action brought for the price of coke, on November 29, 1879, pleaded as a set-off or counter-claim damages from the breach of a contract for the sale of coke, such contract being in writing, dated November 11, and beginning to run December 1, 1879. It was proved that the plaintiffs, on November 19, six days after the making of the contract, notified the defendants that they would not make any deliveries under it. On December 4, 1879, they wrote the plaintiffs they were ready to receive the coke and make payment therefor; that if shipments were not made they

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 1008; *Hutchinson v. Canavan*, 4 How. Mass. 370; *Brazelton v. Brooke*, 2 Head, 194.
² *Richards v. James*, 2 Ex. 471.
³ *Sennett v. Johnson*, 9 Barr, 335.
⁴ Leake, 2d ed. 1008, citing *Maw v. Ulyatt*, 31 L. J. C. 33.
⁵ *Lee v. Lester*, 7 C. B. 1008.
⁶ *Eyton v. Littledale*, 4 Ex. 159.
⁷ *New Quebrada Co. v. Carr*, L. R. 4 C. P. 651.
⁸ *Lowell v. Lane*, 33 Barb. 292.

Read, 3 Camp. 329; *Evans v. Prosser*, 3 T. R. 186; *Gladstane's case*, L. R. 1 Ch. 538; *Houghton v. Houghton*, 37 Me. 72; *Carpenter v. Butterfield*, 3 Johns. Ca. 145; *Morrison v. Moreland*, 15 S. & R. 61; *Huling v. Hugg*, 1 W. & S. 418; *Smith v. Ewer*, 22 Penn. St. 116; *Stewart v. Ins. Co.*, 9 Watts, 126; *Mizzell v. Moore*, 7 Ired. 225; *Haughton v. Leary*, 3 Dev. & B. 21; *Walker v. McKay*, 2 Metc. (Ky.) 294; *Carpew*

would buy in the open market, and hold the plaintiffs responsible for any difference in price they would have to pay, etc., etc. It was held that even if the plaintiffs did not fulfil the contract for the sale of coke, there was, at the time of the commencement of the action, no breach, and defendants had no right of set-off on that account. "Nor does it help the defendants that when the cause was tried the breach was complete. The date of the commencement of the suit is the obvious test in such cases."¹

§ 1021. It is essential, to enable a set-off to be put in evidence, that it should be a debt from the plaintiff to the defendant. The test is mutuality.² Set-off, in regard to parties, may be considered as follows:—

Debts must be between the same parties.

1. When the defendant sued by a single plaintiff sets off a debt claimed to be due him jointly by the plaintiff and a third party. In this case the set-off cannot be permitted, as the defendant could not have maintained a suit against the plaintiff on the debt.³ Hence, in a suit by A., a set-off against A. and B. as partners cannot be received.⁴ Nor can B., when sued by A. for a separate debt, set off, under the English statute, a debt due from A. to B. and C. jointly;⁵ though if sued solely by A. for a joint debt of himself and another, he may plead a set-off of a debt due to them jointly by A.⁶ It is

¹ Paxson, J., *Zuck v. Rafferty*, Sup. Ct. Penn. 1881, citing *Morrison v. Moreland*, 15 S. & R. 61; *Carpenter v. Butterfield*, 3 Johns. Cas. 144.

² *Isberg v. Bowden*, 8 Exch. 852; *Schofield v. Corbitt*, 11 Q. B. 779; *Parker v. Kendall*, 3 Vt. 540; *Stickney v. Clement*, 7 Gray, 170; *Backus v. Spalding*, 129 Mass. 234; *North Bridge-water Bank v. Soule*, 129 Mass. 528; *Francis v. Rand*, 7 Conn. 221; *Dale v. Cooke*, 4 Johns. Ch. 11; *Murry v. Toland*, 3 Johns. Ch. 599; *Falkland v. Bank*, 84 N. Y. 145; *Ramsey's App.*, 2 Watts, 228; *McDowell v. Tyson*, 14 S. & R. 300; *Carman v. Garrison*, 13 Penn. St. 158; *Haage's App.*, 17 Penn. St. 181; *Singerly v. Swain*, 33 Penn. St. 102; *McCracken v. Elder*, 34 Penn. St.

239; *Logan v. King*, 38 Penn. St. 93; *Scott v. Fritz*, 51 Penn. St. 418; *Balt. Ins. Co. v. McFadon*, 4 H. & J. 31; *Watkins v. Lane*, 4 Md. Ch. 13; *Hen-nighausen v. Tischer*, 50 Md. 583; *Fus-ting v. Sullivan*, 51 Md. 489; *Tyrrell v. Tyrrell*, 54 Md. 167; *Ryan v. Barger*, 16 Ill. 28; *Enix v. Hays*, 48 Iowa, 86; *Jones v. Blair*, 57 Ala. 457. See *Bow-year v. Pawson*, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 540, and note thereto, 29 Eng. R. 704.

³ *Arnold v. Bainbridge*, 9 Ex. 153; *Jackson v. Robinson*, 3 Mason, 138; *Blankenship v. Rogers*, 10 Ind. 333; *Ryan v. Barger*, 16 Ill. 28.

⁴ *McDowell v. Tyson*, 14 S. & R. 300.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1011, citing *Middle-ton v. Pollock*, 44 L. J. C. 618.

⁶ *Stackwood v. Dunn*, 3 Q. B. 822.

otherwise as to a debt owing by the plaintiff to a co-obligor, not summoned, which cannot be set up against a joint demand.¹ A surviving partner, also, in a suit against himself on a debt individually incurred by him, can set off a debt due by the plaintiff to the firm of which he was a member.² On the death, also, of one of two or more joint debtors or creditors, the debt accrues to the survivor, and may then be pleaded as a set-off to an originally several debt of the survivor.³ A defendant, also, sued singly by a single plaintiff, may set off a joint and several debt due him by such plaintiff with others.⁴ And to a suit by a surviving partner for a firm debt the defendant may set off a debt due to him by the plaintiff in his individual capacity;⁵ unless, in case of the insolvency of the plaintiff, it should appear that this would work injustice to the firm.⁶—Where there is one plaintiff and one defendant, the defendant may introduce, as an equitable defence, a debt due from the plaintiff to the defendant and his partners as a firm. This is not technically a set-off, unless the debt should have been assigned to the defendant; but the right to use such a debt for such a purpose is to be inferred from the assent of the other partners, when such assent is proved.⁷

¹ *Henderson v. Lewis*, 9 S. & R. 379; *Archer v. Dunn*, 2 W. & S. 327.

² *Johnson v. Kaiser*, 40 N. J. L. 286.

³ *French v. Antrade*, 6 T. R. 582, cited *Leake*, 2d ed. 1012.

⁴ *Owen v. Wilkinson*, 5 C. B. N. S. 526.

⁵ *Lewis v. Culbertson*, 11 S. & R. 48.

⁶ *Waln v. Hewes*, 5 S. & R. 468.

⁷ *Wrenshall v. Cook*, 7 Watts, 464; *Craig v. Henderson*, 2 Barr, 261; *Solli-day v. Bissey*, 12 Penn. St. 347.

In *Hopkins v. Lane*, N. Y. Ct. App. 1882, 25 Alb. L. J. 175, the plaintiff sold to L., B., and M. jointly, a quantity of cheese. Each of the purchasers gave plaintiff a note for his share of the purchase-money. In an action against L. upon his note, he set up a counter-claim of breach of warranty and fraud in the sale of the cheese.

It was held, that the counter-claim was not available to L. The sale, such is the reason given, was joint and the liability of the purchasers was joint, but after the giving of the notes there was no joint obligation, simply because the cheese had been paid for. "But payment in the mode adopted did not affect the contract of purchase or the relation between the parties growing out of the joint purchase. Any claim, therefore, for damages growing out of the breach of warranty or the fraud, belonged to the three purchasers jointly, and could not be used by one of them as a counter-claim. One of them could not have separately sued the plaintiff to recover such damages, hence one of them cannot separately set up such damages as a counter-claim, under Code Civ. Pro. § 151."

2. Where there are several joint plaintiffs and one defendant; in which case a debt due by one of the plaintiffs cannot be set off.¹ To permit such a set-off would work injustice, "because that would be varying the remedy of the others without their consent, and compel them to exchange one debtor for another who might not be equally good or solvent."²—Under the English judicature act, a defendant to a suit by several plaintiffs on a joint claim may set off separate counter-claims connected with the same matter, against each plaintiff.³

3. Where there are two or more defendants jointly sued by one plaintiff; in which case one of the defendants, if there be no conflicting equities, may set off a debt due him by the plaintiff, the other defendants being assumed to assent.⁴—Courts of equity, in respect to the general principle before us, follow courts of law in refusing to allow a set-off of a separate against a joint debt, unless such assent is to be inferred.⁵ But where one joint debtor is only a surety for the other, he may set off a debt to the creditor by the co-defendant, who is virtually the principal.⁶ And a joint debtor or creditor may by his conduct estop himself from maintaining that a debt offered to be set off was joint and not several.⁷

¹ Woods v. Carlisle, 6 N. H. 27; Palmer v. Green, 6 Conn. 14; Pickney v. Kyler, 4 E. D. Smith, 469; Milburn v. Guyther, 8 Gill, 92; Tyrrell v. Tyrrell, 54 Md.; Booe v. Watson, 13 Ind. 387; Harlan v. Prosser, 28 Ga. 219; Davis v. Notware, 13 Nev. 421; Thatcher v. Notwell, 4 Col. 375. As to partnership, see *infra*, § 1028.

² 2 Smith, L. C. 7th Am. ed. 320, citing Archer v. Dunn, 2 W. & S. 327; Johnson v. Kent, 9 Ind. 252; see Choen v. Guthrie, 15 W. Va. 100; Elder's App., 39 Mich. 474.

³ Leake, 2d ed. 1012; Manchester, etc. R. R. v. Brooks, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 243.

⁴ Childerston v. Hammon, 9 S. & R. 68; Stewart v. Coulter, 12 S. & R. 252; Crist v. Brindle, 2 Rawle, 121; Bal-

sley v. Hoffman, 13 Penn. St. 603; Miller v. Kreiter, 76 Penn. St. 78; Locke v. Locke, 57 Ala. 473; Leach v. Lambeth, 14 Ark. 668; see Montz v. Morris, 89 Penn. St. 392; 2 Smith's Lead. Cas. 7th Am. ed. 320; Troubat & Haly's Prac. (Brightly's ed.) § 551.

⁵ Story, Eq. Jur. 12th ed. § 1437; Leake, 2d ed. 1011.

⁶ *Infra*, § 1024; Hanson *ex parte*, 12 Ves. 346; 18 Ves. 232; Cheetham v. Crook, 1 McC. & Y. 307; Dale v. Cooke, 4 Johns. Ch. 15.

⁷ Stephens *ex parte*, 11 Ves. 24; Vulliamy v. Noble, 3 Mer. 621. To a suit on a note by a bank as endorsee the defendant may set off stock held by him in the bank. Whittington v. Bank, 5 H. & J. 489. A debt for goods sold to a husband will not be a set-off to a

§ 1022. When an executor sues in his representative capacity, a debt due by him personally cannot be set off by the defendant, nor when he sues as an individual can a debt due by him as executor be set off;¹ nor, under the English statute, when an executor sues for a debt accruing to him as such after his testator's decease, can a debt due to the defendant from the testator in his lifetime be set off;² nor to an action by the executor for a debt due the testator at his death can there be set off a promissory note of the testator that accrued after his death.³ The debt of an ancestor, also, cannot be set off to meet a suit by the heir, although the heir came into possession by descent of assets which might have been made chargeable with the debt.⁴ But to a suit for a debt due the deceased during his lifetime, all debts due by him in his lifetime may be set off; and the converse also holds good.⁵ In this country a still more liberal practice has grown up, mutual debts being set off against each other after the death of one of the parties without regard to the period of maturity;⁶ though, in cases of insolvency, set-offs of this class will not be permitted where the effect is to disturb equality of distribution.⁷ In equity it is held that to a suit by a distributee an administrator may set off a debt due by the distributee to the administrator in his own right.⁸ And an executor may retain a legacy by

suit brought by him jointly with his wife on a note given to her when sole. *Smith v. Johnson*, 5 Harring. 40.

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 1013; *Bishop v. Church*, 3 Atk. 691; *Isberg v. Bowden*, 8 Exch. 854; *Grew v. Burditt*, 9 Pick. 265; *Wolfersberger v. Bucher*, 10 S. & R. 16; *Dale v. Cooke*, 4 Johns. Ch. 11; *Fry v. Evans*, 8 Wend. 530; *Hills v. Tallman*, 21 Wend. 674; *Armstrong v. Pratt*, 2 Wis. 299; *Harbin v. Levi*, 6 Ala. 399; *Jones v. Brevard*, 59 Ala. 499; *Bales v. Hyman*, 57 Miss. 330; see *Bailey v. Finch*, L. R. 7 Q. B. 34.

² Leake, 2d ed. 1013; 2 Wms. on Ex.

1596; *Schofield v. Corbett*, 11 Q. B. 779; *Rees v. Watts*, 11 Ex. 410.

³ *Newell v. Bank*, L. R. 1 C. P. D. 496; see *Mardall v. Thelusson*, 6 E. & B. 976.

⁴ *Scott v. Scott*, 17 Md. 78.

⁵ *Blakesley v. Smallwood*, 8 Q. B. 538.

⁶ *Mercein v. Smith*, 2 Hill, 210; *Dorshheimer v. Bucher*, 7 S. & R. 9.

⁷ *Bosler v. Bank*, 4 Barr, 32; *Granger v. Granger*, 6 Ohio, 35; *Poorman v. Goswiler*, 2 Watts, 69.

⁸ *Taylor v. Taylor*, L. R. 20 Eq. 155; cited Leake, 2d ed. 1014; see *Farrow v. Farrow*, 12 S. C. 168.

way of set-off against a debt due from the legatee to the testator.¹

§ 1023. When an agent deals as such, and a suit is brought by the principal on a debt incurred to the agent as agent, a debt due by the agent to the defendant cannot be set off.² But when the principal is not known in the transaction, and when the agent is permitted by the principal to appear as the sole party in interest, then the defendant may offer as a set-off debts due to himself by the agent.³ The question is one of notice. If it was the duty of the defendant to have advised himself of the fact of agency, then he cannot set up the agent's debts to him against the principal.⁴

Agents' debt cannot be set off against principal.

§ 1024. When a surety is sued on his obligation as surety, he is entitled to set off any debt due from the creditor to the principal, by which the debt of the principal to the creditor could be diminished.⁵ A surety may also set off a debt due himself by the creditor in reduction of the principal indebtedness.⁶

Surety may avail himself of debts due his principal.

§ 1025. After a debt is assigned, the assignee is regarded as the real creditor, and the defendant, in a suit brought on it, may set off a debt to him from the assignee,⁷ though the assignee takes the debt burdened with any equities which may have attached to it

After assignment debt due assignee may be set

¹ *Campbell v. Graham*, 1 Russ. & M. 453; *McMahon v. Burchell*, 5 Hare, 325.

² Wh. on Agency, §§ 447, 467, 755; *Reutschler v. Huckle*, 3 Ill. Ap. 144; as to partnership, see *infra*, § 1028.

³ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1014; *George v. Claggett*, 7 T. R. 359; *Semenza v. Brinsley*, 18 C. B. N. S. 467; *Dixon ex parte*, L. R. 4 C. D. 133; *Oulds v. Harrison*, 10 Exch. 572; *Parker v. Donaldson*, 2 W. & S. 9; *Gardner v. Allen*, 6 Ala. 187.

⁴ *Borries v. Bank*, L. R. 9 C. B. 38; *Dresser v. Norwood*, 17 C. B. N. S. 466.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1017; 2 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 320; *Murphy v. Glass*, L. R. 2 P. C. 408; *Bechervaise v. Lewis*,

L. R. 7 C. P. 372; *Green v. Darling*, 5 Mason, 201; *Newell v. Salmons*, 22 Barb. 647; *Crist v. Brindle*, 2 Rawle, 121; *Knour v. Dick*, 14 Ind. 20; see *Hanson ex parte*, 12 Ves. 346; S. C., 18 Ves. 252; *Dale v. Cooke*, 4 Johns. Ch. 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*, *Stephens ex parte*, 11 Ves. 24; see *Dart v. Sherwood*, 7 Wis. 523.

⁷ *Clark v. Cort*, Cr. & Ph. 154; *Me-grath v. Gray*, L. R. 9 C. P. 216; *Shelden v. Kendall*, 7 Cush. 217; *Com. v. Bank*, 11 Metc. 129; *Spencer v. Babcock*, 22 Barb. 326; *Beckwith v. Bank*, 5 Selden, 211; *Ward v. Martin*, 3 Monroe, 18; and cases cited *supra*, § 842.

off in suit
by him.

before notice to the defendant of the assignment.¹ No debt, however, incurred by the assignor to the defendant after he has had notice of the assignment can be set off by him against the assignee.²—To a suit by the *bona fide* endorsee for value of a note, a demand in favor of the maker against the endorser is not admissible as a set-off, although the note when the endorsee took it was overdue.³

§ 1026. An assignee in bankruptcy or insolvency, not being a purchaser, takes subject to any equity available against the assignor.⁴ In Massachusetts, unliquidated claims,⁵ “demands not yet due,”⁶ and demands growing out of partial failure of consideration,⁷ may be set off in an action brought by the assignees of an insolvent during his life, or by his executors after his decease.”⁸ No claim, however, acquired after the bankrupt or insolvent assignment, and no claim got up in contemplation of such assignment, can be set off against the assignee.⁹ A claim, therefore, bought by a debtor, after notice that a petition in insolvency is about to be filed, cannot be used by him as a set-off.¹⁰ Nor can a debt due from an assignor be set off against a suit brought by the bankrupt assignee to recover the price of the bankrupt’s effects sold by the assignee to the defendant; as otherwise one purchaser might pay himself in

¹ Cavendish v. Graves, 24 Beav. 163; Aldrich v. Campbell, 4 Gray, 284; Hunt v. Shackelford, 55 Miss. 94; see fully *supra*, § 842 for cases.

² See *supra*, §§ 836, 842 *et seq.*; Watson v. R. R., L. R. 2 C. P. 593. That a court of equity will intervene where there is no due remedy in this respect at law, see Blake v. Langdon, 19 Vt. 485. As we have already seen, a debt, to the assignor, to be a set-off, must be due at the time of the assignment, *supra*, § 844.

³ Chandler v. Drew, 6 N. H. 469; Stedman v. Gillson, 10 Conn. 55; Robinson v. Lyman, 10 Conn. 30; see Chambliss v. Matthews, 57 Miss. 306.

⁴ Smith v. Hodson, 2 Smith L. C. 7th

Am. ed. 129; Tuckers v. Oxley, 5 Cranch, 34; Holbrook v. Receiver, 6 Paige, 220; Maas v. Goodman, 2 Hilt. 275; Stow v. Yarwood, 20 Ill. 497.

See Lloyd v. Turner, 5 Sawyer, 463; Edmunds v. Harper, 31 Grat. 637.

⁵ Bemis v. Smith, 10 Met. 194.

⁶ Demmon v. Bank, 5 Cush. 194; Bigelow v. Folger, 2 Metc. 255.

⁷ Knapp v. Lee, 3 Pick. 452; Jarvis v. Rogers, 15 Mass. 407.

⁸ 2 Smith’s L. C. 7th Am. ed. 308.

⁹ Irons v. Irons, 5 R. I. 264; Clarke v. Hawkins, 5 R. I. 219; Northampton Bk. v. Balliett, 8 W. & S. 317.

¹⁰ Smith v. Hill, 8 Gray, 572; Ogden v. Cowley, 2 Johns. 274; Richter v. Selin, 8 S. & R. 425.

full out of the bankrupt's assets, to the spoliation of others.¹ The same distinctions apply to receivers of insolvent firms or corporations, although authorized to sue in their own names.²

§ 1027. To a suit by A. against B., B. is not permitted to answer that behind A. is C., who is B.'s debtor, unless it should be alleged that the suit is really for the benefit of C.³ If, however, the suit is for C.'s benefit, and if A. sues merely as trustee for C., then a debt due by C. to B. may be set off by B.⁴

Principal's
debt may
be set off
against
agent.

§ 1028. Set-offs with regard to partners are governed by the same principles as set-offs with regard to agents. If a firm permits a particular partner to deal as if he were the sole person interested, it must take the consequences, and when he sues for a debt due, as it may be alleged, to the firm, a personal debt due by him to the defendant may be set off.⁵ On the other hand, he cannot, by bringing the suit in his own name, cut off the defendant from using a set-off against the firm, if the firm is the party beneficially inter-

So as to
partners.

¹ 2 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 314, citing *Shipman v. Thompson*, Willes, 103; *Shaw v. Gookin*, 7 N. H. 16; *Fry v. Evans*, 8 Wend. 530; *Mercein v. Smith*, 2 Hill, N. Y. 210; *Laurence v. Neilson*, 21 N. Y. 158; *Wolfersberger v. Bucher*, 10 S. & R. 10; *Hillier v. Ins. Co.*, 3 Barr, 470; *Steel v. Steel*, 12 Penn. St. 64; *McDonald v. Black*, 20 Ohio, 185; *Mellen v. Boarman*, 13 Sm. & M. 106.

² 2 Smith's L. C. *ut supra*, citing *Clarke v. Hawkins*, 5 R. I. 219; *Miller v. Receiver*, 1 Paige, 444; *Holbrook v. Receivers*, 6 Paige, 220; *Robinson v. Howes*, 20 N. Y. 84; *Laurence v. Neilson*, 21 N. Y. 158; *Berry v. Bretts*, 6 Bosw. 627; *Receivers v. Gaslight Co.*, 3 Zab. 283; *Naglee v. Palmer*, 7 Cal. 543.

In *Morgan v. Bank*, 8 S. & R. 73, it was held that the assignees of an insolvent stockholder cannot compel the transfer of his stock without paying the full amount due by him to

the bank. And in *The Receiver v. Gaslight Co.*, 3 Zab. 283, it was held that the right to set off a debt due by a bankrupt to meet a suit by his assignees will be sustained on equitable grounds, notwithstanding apparent want of mutuality. The defendant was consequently held entitled to set off the amount due to him as a depositor and noteholder of the bank, at the time it became insolvent, against the receivers appointed to wind up its affairs, without a previous demand of payment, although such a demand might have been requisite under ordinary circumstances. See statement of case in 2 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 313.

³ Wh. on Agency, §§ 406, 465, 741, 830; *Turner v. Thomas*, L. R. 6 C. P. 610.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *Isberg v. Bowden*, 8 Ex. 852.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1014; *Gordon v. Ellis*, 2 C. B. 821. As to joint plaintiffs and joint defendants, see *supra*, § 1021. As to release see *infra*, § 1038.

ested.¹ Nor to an action by the firm can a debt by one of the partners be set off;² nor to a suit by a partner, a debt due by the firm.³ Under the judicature act, however, separate debts may be admitted as counter-claims.⁴

§ 1029. Under the set-off statutes, claims for unliquidated damages are inadmissible, though such claims may be received under the English judicature act as counter-claims, and may in like manner be put in evidence under the statutes of some of our states. Under the old practice, and by the statutes of other states, wherever the claim cannot be ascertained exactly at the time of pleading, it is inadmissible as a set-off.⁵ Thus a loss on a policy of insurance could not under the old statutes be proved as a set-off;⁶ nor to an action for freight could there be set off damages accruing to the defendant, from the plaintiff's delay in getting the ship ready, except so far as such damages are assessed by the charter-party,⁷ nor a claim for damage to the goods carried;⁸ nor a cause of action exclusively in tort to a cause of action exclusively in contract.⁹ It is otherwise with regard to set-offs for damages assessed and liquidated by the contract,¹⁰ as where by the contract a particular sum is to be paid in lieu of notice for the dismissal of a servant.¹¹ Under statutes providing for the admission of counter-claims, claims for unliquidated damages may be ad-

¹ See Wh. on Ag. §§ 465, 723, 741, 762; *supra*, § 1022.

² *France v. White*, 6 Bing. N. C. 33; *Piercy v. Fynney*, L. R. 12 Eq. 69.

³ *Mitchell v. Sellman*, 5 Md. 376.

⁴ *Manchester R. R. v. Brooks*, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 243.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d ed. 1008 *et seq.*; *Williams v. Flight*, 2 Dow, N. S. 11; *Hutchinson v. Sidney*, 10 Ex. 438; *Brown v. Tibbits*, 11 C. B. N. S. 858; *Crampton v. Walker*, 3 E. & E. 321; *Union Ins. Co. v. Howes*, 124 Mass. 470; *Barry v. Cavanagh*, 127 Mass. 394; S. C., 130 Mass. 436; *Ford v. Burchard*, 130 Mass. 424; *Clyde v. Knight*, 12 R. I. 194; *Parker v. Hartt*, 32 N. J. Eq. 225, 844;

Woods v. Ayres, 39 Mich. 210; *Howell v. Medler*, 41 Mich. 641.

⁶ *Grant v. Exchange Co.*, 5 M. & S. 439; *Thompson v. Redman*, 11 M. & W. 487; *Beckwith v. Bullen*, 8 E. & B. 683.

⁷ *Seeger v. Duthie*, 8 C. B. (N. S.) 45.

⁸ *Meyer v. Dresser*, 16 C. B. (N. S.) 646.

⁹ *Zeigelmuller v. Seaman*, 63 Ind. 489; *Smith v. Printup*, 59 Ga. 610.

¹⁰ See *Leake*, 2d ed. 1010; *Duckworth v. Alison*, 1 M. & W. 412; *Legge v. Harlock*, 12 Q. B. 1015.

¹¹ *East Anglian R. R. v. Lythgoe*, 10 C. B. 726.

mitted in defence.¹—Under the Pennsylvania statute, unliquidated damages arising *ex contractu* may be set off, whenever capable of liquidation, on trial, and when such damages were due at the inception of the suit, though the contract was distinct from that on which suit was brought. If the counter-claim be in excess of the plaintiff's claim, the defendant may have a certificate of a balance in his favor.² Hence, it has been held that in an action on a note the defendant may set off usurious interest paid in another transaction.³ Damages sounding in tort, however, cannot, in Pennsylvania, be defalked, unless in cases in which the defendant could have waived the tort and sued in *assumpsit*.⁴

§ 1030. From the nature of the case there can be no set-off in a proceeding *in rem*;⁵ and a foreclosure suit is a proceeding *in rem*.⁶ Tax procedure falls within the same category.⁷ Hence a debt due to a municipal corporation for taxes cannot be offset by a debt due by the corporation.⁸ But to a *scire facias* on a mechanic's lien the contractor may set off a debt against the plaintiff.⁹

¹ *Supra*, § 1016; Leake, *ut supra*; Norris v. Sharp, 65 Ind. 47; Devries v. Warren, 82 N. C. 356; Bryce v. Parker, 11 S. C. 337; Mobile R. R. v. Clanton, 59 Ala. 392.

² Troubat & Haly's Pract. (Brightly's ed.) § 550, citing Carman v. Ins. Co., 6 W. & S. 155; Ellmaker v. Ins. Co., 6 W. & S. 439; Shoup v. Shoup, 15 Penn. St. 361; Speers v. Sterrett, 29 Penn. St. 192; Hunt v. Gilmore, 59 Penn. St. 450; Halfpenny v. Bell, 82 Penn. St. 128; Biswanger v. Stoker, 2 Weekly Notes, 407; Domestic S. M. Co. v. Saylor, 86 Penn. St. 287.

³ Thomas v. Shoemaker, 6 W. & S. 179; Brown v. Bank, 72 Penn. St. 209; Lucas v. Bank, 78 Penn. St. 228.

⁴ Kachlin v. Mulhollon, 2 Dall. 237; S. C., 1 Yeates, 571; Cornell v. Green, 10 S. & R. 14; Wright v. Smyth, 4 W. & S. 527; Charlton v. Alleghany City, 1 Grant, 208; Thomson's Est., 5 Weekly Notes, 14.

⁵ See Johnson v. Lyttle, L. R. 5 C. D. 692, cited *supra*, § 1014.

⁶ Parker v. Hartt, 32 N. J. Eq. 223, 844.

⁷ Hoffmire v. Rice, 22 Kan. 749; Nebraska City v. Nebraska Gas Co., 9 Neb. 339.

⁸ New Orleans v. Davidson, 30 La. An. part i. 541.

⁹ Gable v. Parry, 13 Penn. St. 181.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RELEASE.

A release is a discharge of a claim, § 1031.	Release to be construed according to intention, § 1037.
At common law must be under seal, or must have consideration, § 1032.	Must be by proper parties, § 1038.
No special words required to constitute, § 1033.	May be conditional, § 1039.
Release discharges debt and incidents, § 1034.	May be by novation and merger, § 1040.
Will be equitably restrained, § 1035.	May be by alteration of document, § 1041.
Effect of covenant not to sue, § 1036.	Rescission implied by lapse of time, § 1042.

§ 1031. A RELEASE is a discharge of a claim. It is distinguishable, therefore, from novation, which implies the substitution of a new for an old claim, while release implies the extinction of the relation of debtor and creditor in the particular instance;¹ and it is distinguishable, also, from payment, which implies the satisfaction of the debtor, whereas a release under seal may be, as we will presently see, without consideration. A release, also, differs from rectification in this, that while a release discharges a contract, rectification restores the contract in the sense in which it was actually intended by the parties.² And a release operates not only as a discharge, but as an estoppel, precluding the party releasing from advancing the claim released against any party doing anything *bona fide* on the faith of the release.³

¹ That a release may be preliminary to novation, see *infra*, § 1040.

² *Supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.* 919.

³ *Rowntree v. Jacob*, 2 Taunt. 141 ;

Baker v. Dewey, 1 B. & C. 704 ; *Harding v. Ambler*, 3 M. & W. 279 ; *Yeomans v. Williams*, L. R. 1 Eq. 184.

§ 1032. A release, unless under seal, is at common law inoperative in abrogating or discharging a contract under seal.¹ By statute in England, however, payment of a sealed obligation may be pleaded in bar without producing a release, and by the common law procedure act the defendant is entitled to pay into court a sum which will answer the claim of the plaintiff in respect of such bond.² The same practice exists in this country in most jurisdictions.—In Pennsylvania a seal has never been held necessary to the release of sealed obligations,³ and this is now the general practice, both as to sealed and unsealed contracts, when there is any consideration for the release.⁴ *Before* breach, it is true, a novation operates as a release.⁵ But *after* breach, whether the contract be under seal or not, a release not under seal must, to be operative, be on a sufficient consideration.⁶—A judgment may in England be barred, so far as its efficiency for execution is concerned, by a release under seal; though to extinguish it as a lien, there should be a rule taken, in our practice, to enter satisfaction.⁷—An exception to the rule that an action cannot be discharged except by a release under seal, or a release with sufficient consideration, is to be found in the case of negotiable paper, which is regulated by rules founded on the custom of merchants; so that liability on such paper “may be discharged by the holder by express dispensation or waiver without deed and without con-

At common law must be under seal or must have consideration.

¹ *Supra*, §§ 996–7; Nichol's case, 5 Co. Rep. 43 a.

² Leake, 2d ed. 887.

³ *Wentz v. DeHaven*, 1 S. & R. 312;

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 996, 1001 *et seq.*; *Lodge v. Dicas*, 3 B. & Ald. 611; *Taylor v. Manners*, L. R. 1 Ch. 48; *Warren v. Walker*, 23 Me. 458; *Munroe v. Perkins*, 9 Pick. 298; *Shaw v. Pratt*, 22 Pick. 308; *Foster v. Purdy*, 5 Met. 442; *Farley v. Thompson*, 15 Mass. 18; *Dearborn v. Cross*, 7 Cow. 48; *Merrill v. R. R.*, 16 Wend. 586; *Whitehill v. Wilson*, 3 Pen. & W. 405; *Snevily v. Reed*, 9 Watts, 396; *Montgomery v.*

Lampton, 3 Met. Ky. 519; *White v. Walker*, 31 Ill. 422.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*

⁶ *Supra*, § 997; *infra*, § 1040; *Foster v. Dawber*, 6 Exch. 839; *Lodge v. Dicas*, 3 B. & Ald. 611; *Bender v. Sampson*, 11 Mass. 42; *Crawford v. Millpaugh*, 13 Johns. 87; *Dambmann v. Schulting*, 75 N. Y. 55; *Whitehill v. Wilson*, 3 Pen. & W. 405; *Snevily v. Reed*, 9 Watts, 396; *Montgomery v. Lampton*, 3 Met. Ky. 519. See *Heckman v. Manning*, 4 Col. 543.

⁷ See *Barker v. St. Quintus*, 12 M. & W. 441.

sideration."¹—By statute in several states releases are to take effect according to the intention of the parties.²

§ 1033. To constitute a valid release no special form of words is requisite. A covenant not to sue indefinitely or never to sue bars the creditor, though not technically a release;³ and so with expressions to the effect that the creditor is no longer to hold the claim to be in force.⁴ An acknowledgment of satisfaction has the same effect;⁵ and so has a covenant to save the debtor harmless from the debt.⁶ But a letter, written by a woman to a man after the latter has broken his engagement to marry her, in which she says: "I don't want you," but which contains a threat holding him responsible at law for his breach of promise, will not be regarded as a release.⁷

§ 1034. Supposing a release to be operative, it discharges, if general, the debt with all damages and costs.⁸ A release, therefore, by a son of his future interest in his father's estate, has been held to be effectual when made intelligently and fairly, and with the approval of the father; and such a release, it has been held, precludes the son from afterwards claiming either as heir or devisee.⁹ But ordinarily a mere possible future interest or bare expectancy is not the subject of release.¹⁰ It is otherwise "in all cases where there is an existing obligation or contract

¹ Leake, 2d ed. 925; citing Byles on Bills, 9th ed. 190.

² Richardson v. McLemore, 5 Bax. 586; Smith v. Gayle, 58 Ala. 600.

³ Ch. on Con. 11th Am. ed. 1146; Ford v. Beech, 11 Q. B. 871; White v. Dingley, 4 Mass. 433; Sewall v. Sparrow, 16 Mass. 24; Cuyler v. Cuyler, 2 Johns. 186; Jackson v. Stackhouse, 1 Cow. 122; Hamaker v. Eberley, 2 Binn. 510; Clark v. Russell, 3 Watts, 213; Clopper v. Bank, 7 Har. & J. 92; Reed v. Shaw, 1 Blatchf. 245; Guard v. Whiteside, 13 Ill. 7. As to covenants not to sue, see *infra*, § 1036; as to releases thereby of joint debtors, *supra*, § 881.

⁴ Hastings v. Dickerson, 7 Mass. 153;

Bac. Abr. Release, A.; 2 Williams's Saund. 471; Shad v. Pierce, 17 Mass. 623; Phelps v. Johnson, 8 Johns. 54.

⁵ Com. Dig. Release, A. I.; White v. Dingley, 4 Mass. 433; Jackson v. Stackhouse, 1 Cow. 122; Clark v. Russell, 3 Watts, 213; Guard v. Whiteside, 13 Ill. 7.

⁶ Clark v. Bush, 3 Cow. 151.

⁷ Wagenseller v. Simmers, 97 Penn. St. 465.

⁸ 2 Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1149; Co. Lit. 291; Bac. Abr. Release, I.; Baker v. Heard, 5 Exch. 959; Veazie v. Williams, 3 Story, 611; Deland v. Man. Co., 7 Pick. 244.

⁹ Curtis v. Curtis, 40 Me. 24.

¹⁰ Pierce v. Parker, 4 Met. Mass. 80.

between parties, although such obligation or contract is executory or dependent upon contingencies that may never happen; still, if the party in whose favor such obligation or contract is made, or who is liable, by force of it, to suffer damage if it is not performed by the other when the contingency happens, shall execute a release of all claims and demands, actions and causes of action, etc., correctly in point of form, and having at the time of executing the release such obligation and contract in view, as one of the subjects upon which the release shall operate, then such release shall be held as a good and valid bar to any suit which may be afterwards brought upon such obligation or contract, or for money had and received, or paid, upon the future happening of the contingency in consequence of which the plaintiff sustains damage, and but for such release would have had a perfect right of action."¹—A release in full for all demands throws on the party alleging an exception, the burden of proving such exception.²—After a debt has been discharged by a release, it cannot be revived by a subsequent promise to pay without a new consideration.³

§ 1035. A court of equity, according to the old practice, would restrain a release to its specific object if its general terms were such that it would be inequitable to give them effect; and the same jurisdiction is now assumed in the common law courts in England under the judicature act,⁴ and in those courts in this country in which equity remedies are applied through common law forms.⁵ "A release," such is the rule, "shall not be construed as applying to something of which the party executing it was ignorant."⁶ So extrinsic proof will be admissible to restrain the effect of a release under seal when it appears that the

Releases
will be
equitably
restrained.

¹ Hubbard, J., *Pierce v. Parker*, 4 Met. Mass. 80. *R. R. v. Blackmore*, L. R. 4 H. L. 623; *Turner v. Turner*, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 829;

² *Curley v. Harris*, 11 Allen, 112; *Brooks v. Sutton*, L. R. 5 Eq. 361. ³ *Sidwell v. Evans*, 1 Pen. & W. 385; *Wentz v. De Haven*, 1 S. & R. 221. 312.

⁴ *Supra*, § 513.

⁵ *Leake*, 2d. ed. 923; see *Lyall v. Edwards*, 6 H. & N. 337; *London, etc.* ⁶ *Wilde, J., Lyall v. Edwards*, 6 H. & N. 337.

release was based on concurrent mistake.¹ But unless fraud be shown, or such concurrent mistake as would lay a basis for rectification, parol proof to restrain a release is inadmissible.² To set aside a release, therefore, when solemnly executed, a clear case of fraud or of mutual mistake must be made out.³ But releases made on the basis of accounts erroneously footed up will be corrected so as to adapt them to the true state of facts.⁴ And a release obtained by fraud will be treated as a nullity.⁵

§ 1036. We have just seen⁶ that a covenant not to sue without limit as to time may preclude further suit. We have next to observe that a covenant not to sue for a limited time does not bar an action on a contract, though it may be, according to modern practice, ground for injunction or stay of execution, or, if the creditor's claim be on a specialty, and judgment be entered, there may be a cross suit on the covenant not to sue, supposing such covenant be independent of and subsequent to the specialty.⁷ Where the covenant not to sue for a limited time, however, is part of the contract, then it qualifies the contract, and no suit can be brought on the contract within the period limited.⁸ And when a covenant not to sue for a limited time provides for forfeiture on the contingency of breach, this is said to operate as a release.⁹—We have already seen that the release of one joint debtor releases all, though it is otherwise with a covenant not to sue.¹⁰ “But although an agreement not to sue one or more

¹ *Morancy v. Quarles*, 1 McLean, 195; *Learned v. Bellows*, 8 Vt. 79; see *Rich v. Lord*, 18 Pick. 322; *Jackson v. Stackhouse*, 1 Cow. 122.

² *Brooks v. Stuart*, 9 A. & E. 854.

³ *Bowles v. Stewart*, 1 Sch. & L. 209; *Phillips v. Clagett*, 11 M. & W. 84; *Rawstorne v. Gandell*, 15 M. & W. 304; *Eastman v. Wright*, 6 Pick. 316; see Wh. on Ev. § 1063.

⁴ *Millar v. Craig*, 6 Beav. 433; see *Skilbeck v. Hilton*, L. R. 2 Eq. 587; *Brooke v. Haymes*, L. R. 6 Eq. 25; see Wh. on Ev. §§ 1064, 1130, 1385.

⁵ Wh. on Ev. §§ 931, 1009, 1019; *Eagle Co. v. Defries*, 94 Ill. 598.

⁶ See *supra*, § 1033.

⁷ *Ford v. Beach*, 11 Q. B. 852; *Webb v. Spicer*, 13 Q. B. 886; *Thimbleby v. Baron*, 3 M. & W. 210; *Gibson v. Gibson*, 15 Mass. 112; *Foster v. Purdy*, 5 Met. Mass. 442; *Fullam v. Vallentine*, 11 Pick. 159; *Winans v. Huston*, 6 Wend. 471; *Clopper v. Bank*, 7 Har. & J. 92; *Guard v. Whiteside*, 13 Ill. 7; and other cases cited in Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1147.

⁸ *Foley v. Fletcher*, 3 H. & N. 769.

⁹ *White v. Dingley*, 4 Mass. 433.

¹⁰ *Supra*, §§ 831, 881, 949, 998.

of several joint contractors or joint wrong-doers, made upon a sufficient consideration, is not a technical release or discharge of the debt due or of the damages sustained, yet, to avoid circuitry of actions, the party with whom the agreement has been made may set it up as a bar of an action brought against him alone for such debt or damages."¹

§ 1037. The rules for the construction of releases are the same as those for the construction of other contractual documents;² it being kept in mind that in a release, when a unilateral document, if there are two equally probable constructions, that telling most against the releasor will be adopted.³ But at the same time, when there are general terms followed by special, the special are to be taken as limiting the general.⁴ "It is now a general rule in construing releases, especially where the same instrument is to be executed by various persons standing in various relations, and having various kinds of claims and demands against the releasee, that general words, though the most broad and comprehensive, are to be limited to particular demands, where it manifestly appears by the consideration, by the recital, by the nature and circumstances of the particular demands, to one or more of which it is proposed to apply the release, that it was so intended to be limited by the parties. And, for the purpose of ascertaining that intent, every part of the instrument is to be considered."⁵ Where, for instance, a debtor covenanted with all his creditors to pay a designated composition, in consideration whereof the creditors released the debtor from all actions, debts, contracts, etc., it was held that the general words of the release were to be

Release to be construed according to intention.

¹ Taylor, J., *Ellis v. Esson*, 50 Wis. 145, citing *Lacy v. Kynaston*, 2 Salk. 575; 1 Pars. on Cont. 28, note i; see *supra*, §§ 831, 1033.

² *Supra*, §§ 627 *et seq.*

³ See *supra*, § 670; *Solly v. Forbes*, 2 B. & B. 38; *Morley v. Frear*, 6 Bing. 547.

⁴ *Supra*, § 664.

⁵ Shaw, C. J., *Rich v. Lord*, 18 Pick. 325, citing *Payler v. Homersham*, 4 M. & S. 423; *Solly v. Forbes*, 2 B. & B. 38; *Jackson v. Stackhouse*, 1 Cow. 126; and, to same general effect, see *Tetley v. Wanless*, L. R. 2 Ex. 21, 275; *Bailey v. Bowen*, L. R. 3 Q. B. 133; *Latter v. White*, L. R. 5 Q. B. 622; *Leonard v. Bellows*, 8 Vt. 79.

restrained by the general provisions of the deed.¹ On the other hand, formal expressions of release are to be construed so as to bear solely on the specific items to be released.² But, unless there be such special restraint, the general terms of the release will be held operative.³

§ 1038. As is elsewhere seen, a release by one joint promisor operates to discharge a debt;⁴ and a release of one debtor discharges all the debtors.⁵—A release by a party holding a merely legal and formal ownership of a debt will not be permitted to affect a party beneficially interested, so far as concerns parties with notice, supposing that the release was made without the knowledge and assent of the party beneficially interested.⁶ But at law a release by a party beneficially interested will not bar a suit by the party holding the legal title.⁷—After a debt has been assigned and notice of the assignment given to the debtor, the assignor loses the power of releasing it.⁸—One partner will not be permitted, in fraud of his co-partners, to release a debt due the partnership as a set-off for a debt due by him individually; and a release based on such a consideration will not be permitted to stand in the way of a collection of the partnership debt.⁹

¹ *Gresty v. Gibson*, L. R. 1 Exch. 112.

² *Lyall v. Edwards*, 6 H. & N. 337; *Payler v. Homersham*, 4 M. & S. 426; *Hazelgrove v. House*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 101; *Dunbar v. Dunbar*, 5 Gray, 103; *Noble v. Kelly*, 40 N. Y. 415.

³ *Sherburne v. Goodwin*, 44 N. H. 271; *Rice v. Woods*, 21 Pick. 30. In a composition deed, a general release is to be limited by the recital of the particular line of debts on which it is meant to operate. *Hazelgrove v. House*, L. R. 1 Q. B. 101; *Gresty v. Gibson*, L. R. 1 Ex. 112. A release of a debtor owing a separate debt, but owing also to the same creditor a partnership debt, will be held to apply to the separate debt. *Kirk ex parte*, L. R. 5 C. D. 800.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 821, 950, 998.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 831, 980, 998.

⁶ *Crook v. Stephens*, 5 Bing. N. C. 688; *Howard v. Baillie*, 2 H. Bl. 618; *Herbert v. Pigott*, 2 C. & M. 384; *Mount Stephen v. Brooke*, 1 Chit. 390; *Barker v. Richardson*, 1 Y. & J. 362; *Manning v. Cox*, 7 Moore, 617; *Sprague v. Gillett*, 9 Met. (Mass.) 91; *Eastman v. Wright*, 6 Pick. 323.

⁷ *Quick v. Ludborrow*, 3 Bulst. 29; *Walmesley v. Cooper*, 11 A. & E. 216; see Story on Cont. §§ 1397 *et seq.*

⁸ *Hackett v. Martin*, 8 Greenl. 77; *Matthews v. Houghton*, 1 Fairf. 420; *Eastman v. Wright*, 6 Pick. 322; *Frear v. Evertson*, 20 Johns. 142; see *supra*, §§ 844, 1021-5.

⁹ *Gram v. Cadwell*, 5 Cow. 489; see *supra*, § 1028.

§ 1039. A release may be made dependent upon conditions.¹ If the condition be subsequent, the release operates as a suspension, and the debt revives on the happening of the condition. This is the case with deeds of composition containing releases with the proviso that if there be default in the payment of the composition the release is to be inoperative.² Of conditions precedent we have illustrations in deeds of composition in which the release is not to take effect until certain payments are made, or certain contingencies take place.³

Release
may be con-
ditional.

§ 1040. As has already been seen,⁴ a release may, before breach, be by novation, *i. e.*, by extinguishing of an old unperformed contract by substituting a new contract in its place. In such cases the original debtor is released on the acceptance of the substituted debtor. And, as we have also already seen,⁵ indebtedness in an informal or parol contract may be released by its merger in a security of greater solemnity. Prior informal conferences are thus merged in written contracts,⁶ and simple contracts are merged in sealed contracts when meant to cover the same ground.⁷ But this effect is not produced when the sealed document is taken as a collateral, as when a specialty executed by a surety is received.⁸—When a new is adopted in the place of an old agreement, the substitution being meant to be entire, then the old is extinguished.⁹ And where a contract of service was terminated by one party resigning and the other accepting the resignation, there being no provision made for any future settlement, and no recognition of any past indebtedness, it was held that the employee could not sue the employer

Release
may be by
novation
and merger

¹ *Supra*, §§ 548 *et seq.*

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 5, 643; Wh. on Ev. §

² *Newington v. Levy*, L. R. 6 C. P. 1014.

180; *Hall v. Levy*, L. R. 10 C. P. 154; see *supra*, § 608.

⁷ *Supra*, § 683.

³ *Walker v. Nevill*, 3 H. & C. 403; *Corner v. Sweet*, L. R. 1 C. P. 456; *Gibbons v. Vouillon*, 8 C. B. 483. And see *supra*, § 545 *et seq.*

⁸ See *supra*, § 684; *Tarr v. Northey*, 17 Me. 113; *Charles v. Scott*, 1 S. & R. 294; *Sterling v. Rogers*, 25 Wend. 658, and cases cited Ch. on Cont. 11th Am. ed. 1161.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*, 1003 *et seq.*

⁹ See as to novation, *supra*, §§ 852 *et seq.*; and also, as to rescission by parol, *supra*, § 661.

⁵ *Supra*, § 684.

on the old agreement for a *pro rata* apportionment of salary which might have been due between the last day fixed for payment and the resignation.¹

§ 1041. A party who either makes or permits a material alteration in a document under which he claims title, is precluded from using such document as evidence.² The burden is on the party producing an altered document to explain the alteration;³ but should the alterations prove to have been merely accidental, or to have been trivial, or to have been made during negotiation, they do not affect the rights of the party to claims on the document, supposing it to be legible.⁴

§ 1042. When an agreement provides for immediate action, and no action is taken under it, and when the position and character of the parties are such that it would be very unlikely that the agreement would lie thus dormant unless it was understood by them that it was abandoned, then, after a lapse of time so long as to admit of no other rational explanation, it will be presumed to have been rescinded by consent.⁵

¹ *Lamburn v. Cruden*, 2 M. & G. 253; see *Grimman v. Legge*, 8 B. & C. 324.

² See *supra*, §§ 696 *et seq.*

³ *Supra*, § 698.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 696 *et seq.*

⁵ *Rushbrook v. Lawrence*, L. R. 5 Ch. 3; *Mills v. Haywood*, L. R. 6 C. D. 196.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NEGLIGENCE IN CONTRACTING.

Non-existence of valid contract does not preclude action for negligence, § 1043.	Party cannot take advantage of his own negligence of expression, § 1050.
Liability of party to void contract affirmed in Roman law, § 1044.	Redress for verbal mistakes, § 1051.
Party may recover back expenses on void contract, § 1045.	Party employing an agent is liable for the latter's negligence, § 1052.
And may recover damages, § 1046.	Contributory negligence to be taken into account, § 1053.
Infants' liability to suits of this class, § 1047.	Agent liable for unauthorized action, § 1054.
So as to lunatics and drunkards, § 1048.	And so of parties advertising rewards, or making public offers, § 1055.
Liability when contract is avoided from mistake as to object, § 1049.	And so of telegraph companies, § 1056.

§ 1043. It has been shown in a prior chapter that there are several lines of cases in which bargains which are on their face contracts are held to have no contractual force. A bargain made by an infant, for instance, may be repudiated by him when he arrives at full age.¹ Proposals may be accepted in a sense so utterly different from that in which they were meant, that no contract between the parties can be held to exist.² A party who negligently and erroneously supposes he is duly authorized to act for another cannot bind such other person by any contract, no matter how solemn.³ But though in such cases no contractual obligations are formed, the party in negotiating with whom another is thereby misled is liable to such other for the damages he sustains in consequence of the miscarriage of the negotiation. It is elsewhere seen that

Non-existence of valid contract does not preclude action for negligence.

¹ *Supra*, § 31.

² *Supra*, §§ 180 *et seq.*

³ Wh. on Ag. §§ 454 *et seq.*

this has been held to be the case with regard to assertions of full age made by an infant to a party who has good reason to rely on the truthfulness of the assertions.¹ We will now proceed to inquire how far such liability may be imposed on those by whose negligence in negotiations others are misled.²

¹ *Supra*, § 53; *infra*, § 1047.

² Mr. Bigelow (Leading Cas. in Torts, 614) says: "A carriage-maker allows the plaintiff to buy a carriage with a view of effecting a sale; and, owing to negligence in its construction, the carriage breaks down, and injures the plaintiff. This is a good cause of action, and yet there was no contract." But does not a proposal to deliver on trial, when the thing is accepted on the condition designated by the owner, constitute a contract? Waiving, however, this criticism, it is enough to say that where there is the fact that a conditional bargain is proposed and accepted, then damages may be obtained for the negligent breach of the contract.

Wherever a contract establishes a duty, then the party for whose benefit the duty is to be performed can sue for negligence in its performance. Wh. on Neg. § 435; Addison on Torts, Wood's ed. 527, citing *Bowman v. Brown*, 3 Q. B. 526.

"If a person undertakes to do an act or discharge a duty by which the conduct of others may properly be regulated and governed, he is bound to perform it in such manner that those who are rightfully led to a course of conduct or action, on the faith that the act will be duly and properly performed, shall not suffer loss or injury by reason of his negligence." Bigelow, C. J., *Sweeney v. R. R.*, 10 Allen, 368; adopted by Hoar, J., in *Coombs v. New Bedford Cord Co.*, 102 Mass. 572.

"I am, however, disposed not quite to acquiesce to the full extent in the proposition that a person is responsible for all the possible consequences of his negligence. I wish to guard against laying down the proposition so universally; but of this I am quite clear, that every person who does a wrong is at least responsible for all the mischievous consequences that may reasonably be expected to result under ordinary circumstances from such misconduct." Pollock, C. B., *Rigby v. Hewitt*, 5 Exch. 243.

"Where a right or duty is created wholly by contract, it can only be enforced between the contracting parties; but where the defendant has violated a duty imposed upon him by the common law, it seems just and reasonable that he should be held liable to every person injured whose injury is the natural and probable consequence of the misconduct. In our opinion this is the well-established and ancient doctrine of the common law, and such a liability extends to consequential injuries by whomsoever sustained, so long as they are of a character likely to follow and which might reasonably have been anticipated as the natural and probable result under ordinary circumstances of the wrongful act. This same rule of law is sanctioned and enforced in *Rigby v. Hewitt*, 5 Exch. 242;" *McDonald v. Snelling*, 14 Allen, 290.

The question in the text is discussed by Bähr, in *Ihering's Jahr.*, vol. xiv. 393, in connection with the following case: A Cologne house sent to a tele.

§ 1044. The liability of a party who by his negligence leads another into a prejudicial negotiation of this class,

graph office the following dispatch, addressed to a Frankfort house: "*Sell* (Verkaufen) 1600 shares Austrian loan," etc. The message was changed in transmission into "*Buy* (Kaufen)," etc.—The Frankfort house, instead of selling, bought the number of shares designated, which in the mean time fell heavily in the market. According to the strict rule of the Roman law, as prevailing in Germany, there was no contract between the Cologne and the Frankfort houses; and it was consequently argued that the loss must fall on the Frankfort house. The court, however, thought otherwise; holding that if there was any negligence in the Cologne house, it must bear the loss; though if the negligence was that of the telegraph company the latter must ultimately be responsible—This is substantially adopting the rule of the text. and the same distinction is taken by Vangerow, § 109, and Windscheid, § 307, and is sustained by several German adjudications. Seuffert, Archiv, Bd. 21, N. 29. Bähr proposes another solution of the difficulty: The rule that there is no contract where there is no actual union of minds as to a specific thing, cannot be sustained, he argues, if we view the mind only subjectively, limiting ourselves to its inner operations. The intention can only be measured by the outer expression taking the form of words or signs; and a party using such words or signs precludes himself from denying that they have the meaning they ordinarily bear. Hence the principle that a party will not be permitted to deny that he is bound by expressions by dependence on which another party dealing with him contractually suffers detriment. The party who uses such expressions un-

designedly is bound to the same effect as if they had been actually designed. (Er haftet aus der äusseren Erscheinung seines Willens gerade so, als ob er wirklich gewollt habe.) Bähr admits that this rule (which is substantially that of equitable estoppel as maintained in our own jurisprudence) is not to be found explicitly stated in the Roman classical standards. He argues, however, that the rule is practically recognized in numerous cases, of which he cites the following:—

1. The prior revocation of a mandate does not cancel a contract made by the agent with a *bona fide* purchaser, who was notified of the mandate but not of its revocation.

2. The same rule is adopted as to the *institor*. Business contracts made by the *institor* bind the principal to parties dealing *bona fide* and non-negligently with the *institor*, though it may happen that the *institor's* authority has been secretly revoked by the principal before the transaction.

3. Contracts made in pursuance of a general power of attorney, also, are not made inoperative by the fact that prior to the contract the powers of the attorney were secretly recalled.

4. A party who contracts with a public institution, accepting, for instance, proposals published by such institution, is bound by the limitations of such proposals, though he may not have acquainted himself with their details. There was no actual concurrence of minds, though there is a contract. In this, as in the prior cases, we have to resort to the fiction of concurrence—the "*Einwilligung wird fingirt*."

5. So of a party coming to a public auction after the conditions of sale have

Liability of party to void contract affirmed in Roman law. is maintained with great skill and force by Ihering, a distinguished German jurist.¹ The prevalent doctrine that essential error avoids a contract, he accepts; but he urges that the party causing the error should

been read. The fact that such a party is not cognizant of these conditions does not relieve him from them should he purchase at the sale.

6. A party, also, who signs a document, will not, as against a *bona fide* purchaser or holder, be permitted to say that he did not know what the document contained.

7. No matter how solemnly a party may protest in private that he is not bound by a contract duly executed by him, this mental reservation is no defence.

8. Questions of interpretation are questions of intention (Interpretationsfragen sind Willensfragen). But this intention is not to be divined by the adjudicating tribunal on purely subjective grounds. The logical interpretation, so Ihering argues, rests on the hypothesis that the true intention is cognizable, both by the other party and by the court. The court cannot take notice of facts which were not known and could not have been known to the other party. The test is, not what the party making the proposal meant, but what the other party must, under the circumstances, have supposed him to have meant. It is maintained by Bähr that this is equivalent to saying that a proposal is to be determined not by the party's private intention, but by the outer appearance (*äusseren Erscheinung*) of the particular case, and the requisite intention is inferred from the facts, so that when not actually existing (*vorhanden*) it is feigned (*fingirt*).

It is conceded by Bähr that a party, in order to set up his *bona fide* interpretation of a proposal, must have acted non-negligently and fairly. In other words, the fiction of a non-existing intention on the part of the proposing party can only be set up by a party accepting non-negligently and in good faith. On the other hand, the party proposing cannot relieve himself from liability by setting up *bona fides*.

In the text (*infra*, § 1051) is given the case of a singer who is engaged by the director of a theatre in mistake for her sister, in which case Ihering, on the assumption that the engagement does not constitute a valid contract on account of essential error as to the object of the contract, maintains that the director is bound to reimburse the singer on the ground of *culpa in contrahendo*. Bähr, on the other hand, holds that if the singer entered into the contract non-negligently and honestly, the director is bound. Bähr calls attention to errors in respect to currency, and says that in such matters the local meaning must prevail, no matter what may have been the intention of one of the parties; and this is undoubtedly so unless the intention is based on the mistake of such party, such mistake not being shared by the other party. Bähr goes on to say, with much acuteness, that nullity on account of essential error as to object is limited to cases where the error was more or less open to inspection, so that each party is to blame, and neither party should have placed on him the burden

¹ Gesammelte Aufsätze, von Rudolph von Ihering, Bd. 1, Jena, 1881.

be made liable for the consequences. If this be not conceded, not only injustice, but "practical hopelessness" would follow.

of a contract as to which both should have seen there was an essential misapprehension. Cases of this class, however, are not frequent, which accounts for the rarity of the decisions in which contracts are annulled on account of essential errors. Thousands of suits, so he states, depend each year on the question of the intention of the parties to a contract. One party maintains that he meant one thing: the other party maintains that he meant another thing. Now, if contracts are nullities when the contracting parties have different intentions, why do we not have in such cases rulings, as numerous as the cases, that no contract existed? So far from such being the case, Bähr declares that every practitioner will concur with him in the statement that such decisions are, as a rule, unknown. In his own long practice, he states that he was concerned in but a single case in which a contract was annulled on account of essential error. A painter (Färber) in Kassel made inquiries, in 1842, of a merchant in Hanover for indigo. The merchant sent samples, designating the price per pound. The painter ordered three boxes at the designated price, "pr. dortiges Gewicht." In Hanover, down to 1835, a heavier standard obtained; in that year the lighter Cologne standard was adopted. The purchaser, on receiving the goods, refused to pay, on the ground that on giving the order he had the old Hanover heavy standard in mind, while the vendor had delivered according to the lighter standard. The appellate court held that the contract was a nullity on account of error in object; but this, as Bähr argues, may be sustained on the ground that the vendor was bound to have known what

the purchaser meant by "dortiges Gewicht." Bähr states that this is the only case of annulling on ground of error to be found in the German reports of Seuffert or of Strippelmann. In other words, he argues, the rule as to error, though speculatively true, is of very rare practical interest, since the cases are almost unknown in which a party who makes an error is not (supposing there be no fraud) precluded by his own negligence from setting it up. And this coincides with our own rule of equitable estoppel. A party who, by his negligent error, leads another *bona fide* to contract with him, cannot set up his error to avoid the contract.

On the same principle, according to Bähr, are to be explained the numerous German rulings by which a party is made liable to *bona fide* promisees on the letter of a contract, though through a slip of the pen, or the mistake of an agent, words varying the intended meaning are introduced. "He who uses the telegraph," so Bähr argues, "must be aware that mistakes are incidental to this mode of communication, and he cannot therefore relieve himself from liability for the effect produced on others by such an instrumentality, if he puts it in motion."

Bähr concludes his criticism by saying that to the doctrine of *culpa in contrahendo* a serious objection exists in the fact that there is no standard of damages by which the injury sustained by such "culpa" can be redressed. The true standard of damages, he maintains, is that which rests on the hypothesis that the contract is still in force, and which makes the party, therefore, liable on the contract and not on the tort. This does not materially differ

The negligent party would go free: the other party would have to suffer the consequences of the mistake. It is clear, he concedes, that a party who non-contractually and non-maliciously makes erroneous statements, is not liable for the injury sustained by others in consequence of their belief in such statements. I may negligently, for instance, print an erroneous report of the stock-market, or I may negligently publish erroneous political intelligence, but a party who has been injured by my error cannot, for this reason, recover from me damages. It is otherwise, however, if I make an offer to a specific person, or to a certain class of persons, conditioned on something to be done by the party addressed; and this something is done, but after it is done, the proposal turns out to be one on which I am not contractually bound. If by my negligence I have induced another party to perform certain services or incur certain expenses in reliance on my proposal, then, he argues, I am liable to such person for *culpa in contrahendo*. And, according to the Roman law, so he maintains: (1) When a contract is held void in consequence

from the practical results of our own cases. There can be no doubt, that should the question arise we would hold a party liable for *culpa in contrahendo*. At the same time the cases in which such a decision could be invoked would be very rare. Wherever the promisee is induced *bona fide* to act on the letter of the promise, the promisor is estopped from disputing such letter. Wherever the promisee knows that the promisor was acting under a mistake, this is ground for reformation or rescission, which, however, would not be granted unless the promisor does equity by recompensing the promisee, if injured without fault of his own, for such injury.

Dr. G. Hartmann, in an article on Wort und Wille im Rechtsverkehr, in Ihering's Jahrbücher for 1881, vol. xx. p. 2, has an article on the same topic. A prescription is put up, such is the illustration with which he opens, by

an apothecary, who blunders as to the words, so as to give a medicine totally different from that ordered. Of course, according to the prevalent doctrine, there is no contract between the apothecary and the purchaser of the medicine, since they have utterly different things in view: the purchaser ordering soda, for instance, and the apothecary selling arsenic. But the fact of there being no contract would not preclude an action for negligence. On the other hand, that this negligence is *culpa in contrahendo* is shown by the fact that a suit for it can only be maintained by a party bearing some sort of contractual relation with the apothecary.

Liability for *culpa in contrahendo* is asserted by Pothier, Traité des Obligations, i. ch. 1, No. 10. He bases it on "l'équité, qui m'oblige à indemniser celui, que j'ai par mon imprudence induit en erreur."

of error as to the thing bargained for, the negligent party is liable for damages; and (2) a similar liability attaches in cases where the contract is held to be void in consequence of incapacity of the vendor to convey.

§ 1045. The party who is thus disappointed by the negligence of another is entitled, in the first place, to recover expenses which he has been put to in order to perfect the transaction which turns out to be invalid. Under this head Ihering¹ enumerates the expenses of executing a deed, the charges of packing and of freight, as well as all other expenses which a party has incurred in the reception or the transmission of property the sale of which is declared void. As by our own common law money paid on an inoperative or void contract can be recovered back, there is no reason why expenses of this kind, incurred on the faith of a contract declared to be void, should not be with us recovered from the party by whose negligent encouragement they were induced.² The principle is very simple. I am led by A.'s promise to make certain outlays. These can be regarded as made at A.'s request, and on an implied promise of repayment. They can, therefore, be recovered back on the transaction falling through.³

Party may recover back expenses on void contract.

§ 1046. Suppose, however, that the promisee in a bargain, which turns out to be void, loses, in consequence of his dependence on the action of the promisor, some definite gain; can he recover for this loss from the promisor? A vendor, for instance, negligently misstates property he undertakes to sell, and afterwards, on the ground that the parties did not agree as to one and the same thing, the contract is rescinded; can the vendee recover from the vendor damages sustained by the vendee from the vendor's negligence? So far as our own distinctive practice is concerned, it is, in the first place, to be inquired whether a vendor may not, by his negligence, estop himself from claiming a rescission. If, by his negligence, he induced the purchaser to make the purchase, then the vendor may be

Party injured by void contract may obtain damages.

¹ Op. cit. 344.

² *Supra*, §§ 742-7 *et seq.*

³ See *supra*, § 742.

equitably estopped from contesting the title so obtained.¹ It is to be observed, in the second place, that a party claiming to rescind on ground of error must do equity before he can obtain a decree of rescission, and this condition would impose on the party seeking rescission the duty of compensating the other party for any loss the latter may have been subjected to by the negotiation.² Supposing, however, no estoppel is set up, and supposing the question not to come up on proceedings in equity brought by one of the parties to rescind the contract, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the rule thus recognized in equity would be held good in law, and that a party who had suffered damage by being led by another into a void contractual relation would be held entitled to recover from such other person compensation for the damage so sustained. An auctioneer, for instance, undertakes to sell to the highest bidder, and, according to the rule heretofore expressed, is liable to such highest bidder in case the sale miscarries.³ Would this liability, so far as concerns the purchaser's right to recover for costs and expenses to which he had been thereby subject, cease because the sale was set aside at the vendor's application for misdescription? An insurer issues a policy which, through his own fault, or through accident, contains an essential misdescription. Would it not be required, as a condition precedent to rescission on his application, that he should save the other party harmless?⁴ and if this duty would be imposed on him in one procedure, would it not be imposed on him in all other lines of procedure in which the question might occur? A solicitor undertakes to see that a particular title is good; would it be pretended that, because the contract between the solicitor and the client was inoperative for some technical defect, the solicitor was not liable to his client for negligence?⁵ Is it agreed that actions for negligence will lie on mandates on which, for want of consideration, no contractual suit would lie.⁶ Even supposing that we should reject the Roman rule that a party negligently leading

¹ See *supra*, § 202 a.

² *Supra*, §§ 207, 285.

³ *Supra*, §§ 25 b, 255, 267.

⁴ *Supra*, § 285.

⁵ *Ireson v. Pearman*, 3 B. & C. 799 ;
Watts v. Porter, 3 E. & B. 743.

⁶ See Wh. on Neg. §§ 435 *et seq.*

another to enter into a contract that turns out to be void is liable in damages to such other person, we reach a substantially similar result by falling back on the English common law rule that a party who negligently makes an erroneous assertion is liable for the consequences.¹ On this reasoning it has been held that in an action against a telegraph company for delivering a message that was never sent, it is not necessary to allege that the implied statement that the message was given to the defendants to forward was false to their own knowledge.² Another illustration may be found in cases in which it is held that a party who, no matter how honestly, obtains credit on the false statement that he is agent for another, is liable to a suit to repay any damages incurred by a party to whom he makes such statement and who acts on it.³ The same principle, also, is illustrated by the familiar rule that money paid on void securities may be recovered back.⁴ Supposing there was an agreement for the sale of such securities, the agreement would not constitute a contract, as there would be an essential error as to the existence of the thing contracted for. Yet in such cases an action on an implied contract can be maintained against the vendor for money had and received; or an action for deceit or negligence, as the case may be, may be maintained against him for his misstatement of the value of the securities. If the misstatement was malicious, then the action must be for deceit; if it was negligent, then the action must be for negligence.⁵

¹ *Supra*, § 241. It is true that this is sometimes put on the ground of legal fraud. "If a man," says Lord Kenyon, "affirms that to be true within his own knowledge which he does not know to be true, this falls within the definition of legal fraud." *Haycraft v. Creasy*, 2 East, 103; *S. P. Marsh v. Falker*, 40 N. Y. 562. But a suit for negligence can be sustained in all cases of injury by negligent misstatements, which, if intentional, would form the basis of an action for deceit; *supra*, § 214.

² *May v. Union Telegraph Co.*, 112 Mass. 90.

³ *Bigelow on Fraud*, 58, citing *Collen v. Wright*, 8 E. & B. 647; *Cherry v. Bank*, L. R. 3 P. C. 24; *Godwin v. Francis*, L. R. 5 C. P. 295; *Richardson v. Williamson*, L. R. 6 Q. B. 276; *Bartlett v. Tucker*, 104 Mass. 336; *White v. Madison*, 26 N. Y. 117, and other cases.

⁴ *Supra*, § 744.

⁵ So far as concerns the question of causal relationship, *McMahon v. Field*, L. R. 7 Q. B. D. 591, may be cited as sustaining the rule stated in the text. In that case the plaintiff supposed he had hired certain stables of the defend-

§ 1047. That an infant may be made liable for negligence in so using his property as to injure another, cannot be ques-

ant, in order to put some horses there which the plaintiff wished to dispose of at a fair held in the town. Soon after the horses arrived they were turned out of the stables in consequence of the defendant having also let the stables to another person, and as the defendant did not supply the plaintiff with other accommodation for the horses, the plaintiff was compelled to obtain it elsewhere. The plaintiff claimed damages for the breach of contract, and alleged that the horses were injured by being thus suddenly turned out of the stables and exposed to the weather while he was seeking other stables for them. The jury gave him 25% for the loss consequent on his not having the use of the stables, and 50% for the injury to the horses. It was held by the English court of appeal in 1881 (Brett, L. J., and Cotton, L. J., concurring, Bramwell, L. J., doubting), that the plaintiff was entitled to damages for the injury to the horses. Brett, L. J., said: "Since the decision in *Hadley v. Baxendale*, 9 Ex. 341; 23 L. J. 179, Ex., the question whether damage is too remote has in my opinion been one of the greatest difficulty. According to the rule in *Hadley v. Baxendale* it must be considered, first, whether the damage was the necessary consequence of the breach of contract, and then whether it was the probable consequence, and then whether it might reasonably be in the contemplation of the parties. The last two questions are really matters of fact, but the courts have to decide them as questions of law. The question here is, did the fact of the horses catching cold come within any part of the rule? It was not the necessary consequence of the defendant's breach of contract, but

I should certainly say that it was the probable consequence if I had to decide the question, and I think it follows that it might reasonably have been in the contemplation of the parties. Here the jury found that the contract had been broken, and that the result of the breach was the damage which the plaintiff suffered. We are asked to say that this is unreasonable, and that the question ought not to have been left to the jury. Now let us consider the facts. The plaintiff brought his horses over from Ireland; he took stabling for twelve horses at Rugley, and arrived at Rugley during fair time, and went into the stables, the horses then having their clothes on. The defendant had let the stables to another man before the plaintiff's arrival, and the other man's horses were in the stables when the plaintiff arrived; thereupon the plaintiff turned those horses out and put his own horses into the stables. Afterward the man who owned the other horses returned, and with the assistance of a servant of the defendant he turned the plaintiff's horses out of the stables, and put his own horses in. No other stabling could then be found for the plaintiff's horses. The defendant knew that these horses had been brought by rail to the fair, and they were turned out hot from the stable. Any one who knew anything about horses would have known that there was a great probability that they would catch cold. So far from thinking as matter of law that this is not a probable consequence, I am convinced as matter of fact that it is. Then there is the decision in *Hobbs v. London and S. W. R. Co.*, L. R. 10 Q. B. 111, which it is contended governs this case. As to that decision I can only say that if I

tioned.¹ Were it not so, all that would be necessary to put an injurious agency or other invasion of the rights of others out of the reach of the law,

Infants
liable for
negligence
of this class

acquiesce in it I cannot bring my mind to agree with it. There a man took tickets for himself and his wife by a midnight train to Hampton Court; his house was two miles off from Hampton Court; he was taken to Esher, which was between four and five miles from his home; could get no conveyance, and he and his wife had to walk home at night in the rain; his wife caught cold, and the judge said that was not the natural consequence of the railway company's breach of contract. Why was the damage there too remote? Take the case of lodgings. Suppose the landlord turned his lodger out on a cold night in her nightgown; would it not be such a natural consequence as to make him liable if she were to catch cold? If he used the least force, and she died, he would certainly be charged with manslaughter. If Esher were known to be a good station, and there had been accommodation at the station which the plaintiffs might have availed themselves of, it would have been their own fault if they had not done so; but there was no such accommodation at the station, they walked, and the wife caught cold. The judges, as a matter of fact and opinion, decided that this was so unnatural a consequence of the railway company's breach of contract that the question could not even be left to the jury. I confess I cannot bring my mind to the same conclusion. Here, however, there is a difference. People do walk home at night and not catch cold; it is not nearly so inevitable a consequence as that horses should catch cold if turned out as these

were. There is a difference between turning horses out at night after a hot journey and leaving people to walk home at night. Still *Hobbs v. London and S. W. R. Co.* is so near the line that in any other case, unless the circumstances were exactly the same, I should distinguish it. I am therefore of opinion that the appeal ought to be allowed, and in so deciding we are not overruling *Fry, J.*, except in mere form, for he only yielded to the decision of the queen's bench in *Hobbs v. London and S. W. R. Co.*, and his own opinion was that the plaintiff was entitled to these damages." See discussion in *Central Law Journal*, June 24, 1881, p. 583.

In *Neilson v. James*, 46 L. T. N. S. 791, the liability of a party for negligence in contracting was incidentally affirmed by the English court of appeal. By an act of parliament (Leeman's act) contracts for sale of bank shares are null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever unless the contract shall set forth in writing the shares by their numbers, or where there is no register of shares by distinguishing numbers, and the name of the registered proprietor of the shares. In the case before the court the plaintiff employed the defendant, a stock broker, to sell bank shares. The defendant agreed with a jobber to sell the shares to him, but did not comply with the provisions of the statute. Before the name-day the bank failed, and the jobber refused to take the shares. In an action for negligence in not making a binding contract for the sale of the shares, the de-

¹ See Wh. on Neg. §§ 310, 322.

would be to convey the property from which it springs to an infant. A mill-dam, for instance, is so negligently constructed as to flood a neighbor's fields, or a mine so negligently worked as to injure a mine on a lower level, or a building is so negligently constructed as to hurt a passer-by; and if infant owners were not responsible for such damage, not only would many injuries remain unredressed, but there would be a temptation to place all enterprises involving risks to society in the hands of infants. If, however, an infant is liable for negligent management of one kind of property, it is hard to see why he should not be made liable for negligent management of another kind of property. An obligation is as much a valuable thing as land; it is taxable; it has a local seat; the fact that it is voidable does not destroy liability for its misuse any more than the fact that a conveyance of land is voidable does not relieve a party in possession under a deed subsequently avoided from liability for injury to others caused by his mismanagement of the lands when in possession. It is objected, it is true, to this view, that if it be maintained, (1) an infant is virtually made liable on a contract, which is contrary to a settled rule of law; and (2) the protection the law affords to infants from improvident bargaining would be illusory. The first objection, as is well remarked by Ihering, rests on a *petitio principii*, since the very question at issue is whether the claim in litigation is contractual. If it is not, then it can be maintained, so far as the present objection is concerned, since an infant is beyond doubt liable in tort. As to the second objection, it is replied by Ihering that its force is very much diminished by the fact that the cases in which such suits could be set up are comparatively rare, and based on strong equities. We would have, at the outset, to put out of the question all cases in which the ap-

fendant set up as a defence a custom of the Bristol Stock Exchange to sell shares without complying with the statute. It was held that such a custom was unreasonable and illegal, and was not binding on plaintiff, and, therefore, that the defendant was liable for the amount which plaintiff would have received for the shares if the contract of sale had been binding. Lord Coleridge, C. J., Brett, and Cotton, JJ., concurred, reversing in this point the ruling of Stephen, J.

pearance of the minor gives the party dealing with him ground to suspect his minority. Although an infant would be liable, on general principles, to a suit for negligence, yet when the basis of the suit is negligence in the defendant in permitting himself to be regarded as an infant, the plaintiff, who had reason to suspect such infancy, and did not inquire into it, would be barred by his contributory negligence from pressing his suit. The line of suits of this class would be contracted to the few cases in which an infant deals with a party *bona fide*, believing him to be of full age. If an infant as to such parties has certain prerogatives, then he is liable for the abuse of such prerogatives. If he can make a valid endorsement of negotiable paper,¹ then he is liable for the negligent making of such endorsement. If he would have been liable on a contract supposing he was, what he appeared to be, of full age, then he is liable for negligence in case he negligently conceals the fact of his minority, the other party having no reason to suspect the truth.²

§ 1048. The same distinctions may be taken as to other forms of mental incapacity. Unless there be some positive statute in the way, a contract made *bona fide* with a lunatic, without notice of his incapacity, will be enforced.³ This is *a fortiori* the case with drunkards. A man may be so sottishly drunk that it would be a fraud to engage him in business; yet if he endorses a promissory note, he will be bound to a *bona fide* holder who takes it without notice.⁴ A person once a lunatic cannot set aside a contract made by him when his mind was clouded without doing equity; and if he had sense enough when he made a bargain to conceal all traces of insanity so that the other contracting party did not suspect such insanity, he cannot have the contract rescinded without paying back any expenses the other party may have incurred in consequence of the transaction. So a party cannot ask to rescind on the ground of

So as to lunatics and drunkards.

¹ See *supra*, § 66.

² So far as concerns malicious injuries, we have already seen that while an infant cannot be made liable on a contract declared on as a tort, it is

otherwise when the suit is for damages incurred by deceit when the suit is not based on contract. See *supra*, §§ 52-3

³ See *supra*, § 106.

⁴ See *supra*, § 118.

drunkenness without offering to repay any damages incurred by the other side. And in general, a party who is compelled to repay before maintaining a bill for specific performance, should be compelled to reimburse in a suit brought against him for negligence.

§ 1049. We have already incidentally noticed the question whether, when a contract fails from mistake as to its object,¹ the party negligently making the mistake is liable for the damage thereby sustained by the other side. The Roman law affirmed this liability in several conspicuous relations. A free-man, for instance, is sold in mistake for a slave. The sale is void; the contract is a nullity; yet, nevertheless, the party undertaking to sell is bound to reimburse to the party undertaking to buy the expenses sustained by the latter.²—In the same category the Roman law places contracts failing from the non-existence of the object. Such non-existence of a thing assumed by both parties to be existing may occur in cases where the thing never existed at all, or in cases where having existed it has ceased to exist. In the last of these cases the promisor either knew or did not know the fact of the non-existence. If he did, then he is liable in an action of deceit, if not in an action on a guaranty,³ while no such action would lie should the promisee know of the non-existence.⁴ Supposing, however, that a party sells a non-existent thing of whose non-existence he ought to have had notice, then he becomes liable for any injury to the other party which his ignorance may have caused. A ship-owner, for instance, sells a ship which is at the time of the sale lost at sea, of which loss the vendor, had he exercised due diligence, would have been aware. In this case the owner would be liable to the other party for the loss accruing to the latter by the disappointment.⁵ It is true that, in cases where the consideration fails, the money paid may be recovered back;⁶ but this would not preclude the party injured from suing in tort where there

Liability
when con-
tract is
avoided
from mis-
take as to
object.

¹ See *supra*, §§ 186 *et seq.*

² Ihering, *ut supra*, Aufsätze, 383–4.

³ See *supra*, §§ 302, 315.

⁴ *Supra*, § 303.

⁵ See *supra*, §§ 309 *et seq.*

⁶ *Supra*, §§ 742 *et seq.*

was a tort.¹ The same distinction applies to sales of patent or other rights. A vendor negligently sells that to which he has no title. If so, he is liable (irrespective of the question of warranty or other contractual duty) for any damage caused by his negligence.² It is otherwise, however, when the thing which is sold, though not existing in the power of the vendor at the time of the contract, could be procured by him. In such case the vendor is bound to procure the article, and is liable, not for damages, but contractually for the article itself or its value.³ But however this may be, we have to fall back, in respect to contracts inoperative from essential error as to parties or object, on the rule that, wherever a party seeking to rescind would be required to refund or reimburse the other party before proceeding in his suit, there he may be compelled to refund or reimburse in an action by the other party. The process of recovery may be in an action of money had and received.⁴ But, if there be a tort involved, he may be held in a suit for damages based on the tort.⁵

§ 1050. In the Roman law, a party who uses wrong words in an obligation he enters into is liable, in case he be relieved from the obligation in consequence of such mistake, for any damages his negligence may have inflicted on the other party.⁶ In our own law, injustice is prevented in this respect in other ways.

Party cannot take advantage of his negligence of expression.

In the first place, a party seeking to rectify or rescind would not be heard unless he equitably reimburses the other party.⁷ In the second place, a party is estopped, as against *bona fide* purchasers or promisees, from setting up his own negligence.⁸ A party, for instance, who leaves a blank in a paper signed by him cannot complain if this blank is filled up by a party to whom he intrusts it in a way he did not intend.⁹ But aside from these remedies, a party who by his carelessness in dealing with another inflicts injury on such other, there being

¹ *Supra*, §§ 282 *et seq.*

² *Ihering*, op. cit. 388; see *supra*, § 230.

³ See *supra*, § 315.

⁴ See *supra*, §§ 742 *et seq.*

⁵ See *infra*, §§ 1054 *et seq.*

⁶ *Ihering*, op. cit. 390.

⁷ *Supra*, § 285.

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 262 *a*, 908.

⁹ See *supra*, §§ 186, 202 *a*, 688, 697 *et seq.*, 795.

privity between the two, is liable for such injury.¹ He may be liable on such negligence if sued by a party thereby damaged; or he may be precluded from recovering damages from other parties when the damage he complains of was induced by his own negligence.²

§ 1051. Ihering supposes the case of two singers of the same name, one of whom the director of a theatre desires to engage. His letter, owing to his negligence, falls into the hands of the wrong party, who at once accepts the proposal. Supposing the two singers to have capacities utterly distinct, the one accepting being incapable of filling the part designed for the other, it is plain that there is here no contract for which a bill of specific performance would lie; nor would a salary meant for the one singer be recovered by the other. But while this is the case, it is equally clear that the director would be liable for any expenses to which the party addressed had been put by his negligence in addressing the letter.—In our own practice, a party who at another's request incurs certain expenses, is entitled, if a promise can be inferred from the facts, to be reimbursed.³ And, as we have seen, and will hereafter see more fully,⁴ a party who dealing with another misleads such other to the latter's injury by the negligent use of words, may be held liable for the damage thereby inflicted.⁵

¹ See Wh. on Neg. §§ 780–793.

² *Infra*, § 1053. As illustrating estoppel by negligence in relation to negotiable paper may be noticed *Foster v. Mackinnon*, L. R. 4 C. P. 704, where the court said: "If a man write his name across the back of a blank bill, stamp and part with it, and the paper is afterwards improperly filled up, he is liable as indorser. If he write it across the face of the bill, he is liable as acceptor, when the instrument has once passed into the hands of an innocent indorsee for value before maturity, and liable to the extent of any sum which the stamp will cover." Where there is no stamp act, the liability is unlimited. See *London Bank v. Went-*

worth, L. R. 5 Ex. D. 96, to the effect that a party may by negligence be precluded from taking advantage of the defence of forgery; and, to the same effect, see *Rudd v. Matthews*, Sup. Ct. Ky. 1881. That a party drawing a check carelessly binds himself to the bank, see *Young v. Grote*, 4 Bing. 253.

³ *Supra*, §§ 707, 753, 1045.

⁴ *Infra*, §§ 1054–6.

⁵ Ihering gives as a further illustration of the principle in the text a case in which an order was sent for an *Indian-Root Lexicon*, which had been advertised, under the impression that it treated of "roots" in the vegetable world. Supposing this mistake vitiated

§ 1052. We have seen that a party employing a telegraph company is bound by the message the company delivers.¹ The same principle would make the principal liable on an invalid bargain his agent makes for him within the range of the agent's authority; and would also make him liable for the agent's negligence under such circumstances.² The invalidity of the bargain would not relieve the principal in such cases. So, as we will see, a party who negligently contracts to do something for another for whom he is not authorized to act, is liable to the promisee for any damages incurred by the latter through the former's error.³

Party employing an agent is liable for latter's negligence.

§ 1053. In all cases based on the negligence of the defendant, the plaintiff's contributory negligence is to be taken into account.⁴ Thus in an action against an infant for negligently representing himself to be of full age, it would be a defence, as we have seen, that the promisee ought to have been put on inquiry by the infant's appearance;⁵ and the same conclusion would be reached in all cases in which the promisee, if he exercised ordinary vigilance, would have made inquiries which would have shown the error.⁶

Contributory negligence is to be taken into account.

§ 1054. Suppose A. represents to me that he is authorized to make with me a particular bargain, and suppose that on the faith of such bargain, I make certain disbursements or receive certain detriment; can I recover compensation for these losses from A.? There is no question that I can in cases of fraudulent misrepresentation,⁷ and there is equal reason to hold that A. would be liable to me for a negligent misstatement of a fact as to which A. ought to have known the truth.⁸ Hence a telegraph company would be liable for failure to transmit, in ac-

Illustrated in suits against agents for unauthorized action.

a contract for the purchase of such a book, the party ordering would nevertheless be required to reimburse the bookseller for any damages he may have negligently incurred in executing the order.

¹ See *supra*, § 27.

² See Wh. on Neg. §§ 756 *et seq.*

³ *Supra*, §§ 1043 *et seq.*; *infra*, § 1054.

⁴ Wh. on Neg. §§ 300 *et seq.*

⁵ See *supra*, §§ 53, 1047.

⁶ *Supra*, § 245.

⁷ See *supra*, §§ 232 *et seq.*

⁸ *Supra*, §§ 241, 1043.

cordance with its published terms, a telegram left with it.¹ It should be added, that in such cases an action might be sustained on an implied contract against the party in accordance with whose invitation work was done or money expended.²

§ 1055. Liability on advertisements has been already distinctly considered; and it has been seen that if a party advertises a reward for certain services, or offers by public notice to do or give certain things in exchange for a *quid pro quo* to be rendered, the performance of the services or the rendering of the *quid pro quo* establishes a contractual relation with the party making the offer.³ Suppose, however, that no such contractual relation is established; is not the party making the offer liable in damages to parties who without negligence incur loss by acting on it? The affirmative is maintained by Ihering with strong reason.⁴ In this view a common carrier advertising that he would carry passengers to a particular point on a particular day, would be liable to parties for damages they sustained by his failure to be ready at the designated time.⁵

§ 1056. The principle before us will sustain the rulings by which telegraph companies have been held liable for failure in discharge of duty. This cannot be put on the basis of abuse of general duty, or abuse of franchise, as it is sometimes called, since a third party, having no business connection with the company as to a particular message transmitted by the company, cannot sue the company for damages he has sustained in consequence of misstatements in such message. It is otherwise, however, as to a party who has entered into a contractual relation with the company by

¹ Wh. on Neg. § 756; *infra*, § 1056.

² See *supra*, §§ 707, 756.

³ See *supra*, § 24.

⁴ Op. cit. 418.

⁵ *Supra*, §§ 25, 800; see Wh. on Neg. §§ 662, 810. The duty of *diligentia in contrahendo*, so argues Ihering, does not begin until acceptance. When a proposal is still unacted on, the party addressed has no claim against the party making the proposal. As soon, how-

ever, as there is acceptance, or such action on the proposal as is equivalent to acceptance, then the party so accepting may have redress from the proposer in case either the contract is not complied with, or the party imposed on is subjected to injury by an illusory contract. As soon, therefore, as a party takes action on a general proposal, he has a claim against the proposer. See *supra*, § 24.

making or accepting the company as his agent for the transmission of information. Hence, a telegraph company is liable to the sender and to the receiver of messages which it negligently misinterprets;¹ and wherever it assumes the duty of communicating with a particular person, and that duty is accepted by such person, then he may maintain an action against the company for negligence in performance of the duty.² It is true that a sendee, as we have seen, cannot maintain an action against the company for non-delivery of a message without first proving an offer accepted by him, to deliver to him the particular message;³ but as soon as such an offer is made (and that it has been made may be inferred from prior dealings as well as from the reception of the telegram) and accepted, by being acted on, an action will lie against the company by a party thus entering into contractual relations with it. Hence, a telegraph company has been held liable to the receiver for its negligence in sending a dispatch in the name of a cashier who the operator ought to have known did not authorize the use of his name.⁴—These distinctions are of peculiar importance in view of the imperfections attending the transmission of intelligence by telegraph. (1) The senders of messages, in order to diminish expense, and sometimes to hide their meaning from the eye of strangers, confine themselves to general terms, or use simply catchwords or signs which are open to constant misconception. They write often in a hurry; and when they write deliberately they are peculiarly apt to subordinate the sense in which a word will be accepted to the sense which, after long pondering, they attach to it. (2) In the translation of words into telegraphic signs, disturbing influences constantly intervene. It has been frequently noticed that blunders will, in the most inexplicable way, creep into print, notwithstanding the supervision of the

¹ See *supra*, § 27; and see Bigelow, Cases on Tort, 621.

² *Supra*, § 791; Wh. on Neg. §§ 756-7; New York Tel. Co. v. Dryburg, 35 Penn. St. 303 Aikin v. Tel. Co., 5 S. C. 358; De la Grange v. Tel. Co., 25 La. An. 383.

³ *Supra*, § 791. See, however, discussion in Big. Lead. Cas. on Torts, 621.

⁴ Elwood v. Tel. Co., 45 N. Y. 549; S. P. as to liability for sending a false message, Bank of Cal. v. Tel. Co., 52 Cal. 280; and see *supra*, § 791.

most careful proof-reading. But the chances of involuntary transmission of words, as well as of intentional corruption, is far greater with telegraphic operators than it is with printers. A telegraphic operator works from manuscript peculiarly obscure, with no subsequent proof-reading; and a telegraphic operator, instead of transferring words to permanent type, puts them into signs which instantaneously vanish from his eye. These signs, also, have not the sharp differential features of printed words. They are dots and strokes, liable to be mistaken for each other; and there are some words of which the signs are so similar as to cause them to be frequently interchanged. (3) The receiving operator not only, as in the last case, may misunderstand the signs, but may write them in such a way that his writing may be misinterpreted.—The consequence of these various disturbing influences is, that the proportion of errors in telegraphic communications is far greater than in any other documents subject to judicial criticism. In view of the large and growing amount of business transacted by telegraph, it is important to keep the principles heretofore stated in this connection in mind. These principles are: (1) A telegraph company is agent for the party sending through it a dispatch;¹ and also of the receiver, as soon as he enters into contractual relations with the company. (2) The sender of a message is liable to the sendee for damages sustained by the latter from acting on the message as delivered; and the telegraph company is liable to the sender if to its negligence the error is imputable.²

¹ *Supra*, § 27.

² The following is from an instructive article in *Blackwood's Mag.* for April, 1881, Eng. ed. vol. 129, pp. 469 *et seq.*:—

“In any system of symbols for letters, consisting of such simple elements as the telegraph alphabet does—viz. dots and dashes—it is inevitable that there should be considerable similarity between the symbols of some words—a similarity which is, of course, productive of mistakes. We may take it that the Morse system of telegraph symbols, having been adopted univer-

sally throughout the telegraphing world, is the best for the purpose that has been devised; and we presume that it is not likely now to be improved upon. And yet there are many words which are so perilously alike that errors in them are sure to recur from time to time. To name but one instance, ‘bad’ and ‘dead’ are composed of the same number of dots and dashes, the sole difference being that there is in ‘dead’ a ‘space’ or pause wanting in ‘bad’—a difference so slight as to require the nicest perception to distin-

guish it. . . . But it is short-sighted policy to make the wording obscure, in order to frustrate hypothetic official curiosity. If secrecy is important, it would be better to use a cipher. In the majority of cases, however, the true plan is to take the officials into your confidence, and write your message in such guise that he who runs may read. As an illustration of the ingenuity with which people will express themselves, as if for the very purpose of defeating their own object, we may cite the following: A lady, some short time since, telegraphed, 'Send them both thanks,' by which she meant, 'Thank you; send them both' (the 'both' referred to two servants). The telegram reached its destination as 'Send them both back,' thus making sense as the official mind would understand it, but a complete perversion of the meaning of the writer. . . . We may roughly classify the different kinds of errors perpetrated by the telegraph into: 1st. Errors which are due to pure guessing—sheer carelessness, we may call it—against which nothing is proof. 2d. Errors closely akin to the first, but in which the first letter or two are common to both words. 3d. There are errors due to the similarity, more or less great, between the signals of different words. Obviousness of meaning will often help to prevent these also.

"We will now present to the reader

a curious collection of telegraph blunders, illustrative of the three categories we have mentioned. The names, we need scarcely remark, are in all cases fictitious. The first category, as we have said, consists of blunders of sheer guessing; and these in their turn may be subdivided into two classes: 1st. Those in which the different idea conveyed is an allied or a cognate idea, or a widely different idea; and 2d. Those in which the different idea conveyed is the exact opposite to the original idea. Let us take those in which a cognate or a widely different idea is given. Here we have: 'Send three tons linseed oil,' transmitted as 'Send three tons linseed meal.'—'Please to send fifteen waggons of Burgie daily till further orders,' transmitted as 'Please to send us fifteen tons of Burgie daily till further orders.'—'Send us two waiters,' transmitted as 'Send us twenty waiters.'—'Warmest sympathy to Ellen and yourself in your sad loss,' transmitted as 'Warmest congratulations to Ellen and yourself in your sad loss.'—'Ask Lady Grantly if Cox can read aloud,' etc., rendered as 'Ask Lady Grantly if you can read aloud,' etc.—'Cox' seems to have rather an unfortunate tendency to be converted into 'you,' for here is another case of it: 'Have just written to Cox to send no more milk,' was rendered 'Have just written to you to send no more milk.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATION AS TO IMPAIRING
CONTRACTS.

Motives of limitation, § 1061.

Invalidates state legislation impairing contracts between individuals, § 1062.

Invalidates repeals by state legislatures of grants of franchises or of estates unless right of repeal is reserved, § 1063.

Whether exclusive privileges are open to revision is a matter of public policy, § 1064.

Charters subject to reservation, § 1065.

Grants to municipal corporations may be revoked, § 1066.

Laws modifying remedies are constitutional, § 1067.

State discharges do not bind citizens of other states, § 1068.

Marriage not within the limitation, § 1069.

And so as to torts, § 1070.

Tenure of public office may be modified by law, but not specific contracts, § 1071.

§ 1061. The tenth section of the first article of the constitution of the United States provides that “no state shall pass . . . any law impairing the obligation of contracts.” The motives for the introduction of this clause, we learn from the debates and from contemporaneous exposition, were (1) the maintenance of the sanctity of contracts; (2) the preservation inviolable of inter-state trade; and, (3) the vindication of the inherent right of contracting (and it is important to consider this in connection with recent legislation limiting the right)¹ as a primary prerogative of freedom.²

¹ *Supra*, §§ 325, 394.

² In *Gebhard v. R. R.*, 17 Blatch. 416, a Canada statute reducing the interest on the bonds issued by a Canada railroad corporation, was declared, so far as concerns parties not assenting to the reduction, to be void as “repugnant to the fundamental principles of justice.” But see *League v. De Young*, 11 How.

185. That a state constitution is a “law” under the limitation, see *Keith v. Clark*, 97 U. S. 454; *Lehigh Valley R. R. v. McFarlan*, 31 N. J. Eq. 706; *Hays v. Com.*, 82 Penn. St. 518. That a declaratory law overturning an accepted judicial construction of a prior law is void when invalidating a contract under such law, see *Lamberton v. Hogan*,

§ 1062. To take the limitation in its most obvious and general sense, it invalidates all state legislation which impairs contracts between individuals.¹ Hence, legislation reducing interest on existing debts is unconstitutional.² And so is legislation providing for the extinction of antecedent irredeemable ground rents.³

Invalidates state legislation impairing contract between individuals.

§ 1063. The limitation, also, invalidates all repeals by state legislatures of grants of franchises or of estates, unless the right of repeal be reserved in the grant. Hence, a charter by a state legislature granting franchises to a college, without such a reservation, cannot be constitutionally repealed.⁴ Nor when a charter provides that the lands of a college shall not be taxed, can this provision be repealed.⁵ Bank charters, conveying certain banking privileges to the bank corporation, are so far within the limitation that those privileges cannot afterwards, by mere arbitrary legis-

Invalidates all repeals by state legislatures of grants of franchises or of estates, unless the right of repeal is reserved in the grant.

2 Barr, 22; *Reiser v. Savings Fund*, 39 Penn. St. 137; *Haley v. Phil.* 68 Penn. St. 45.

¹ *Williams v. Bruffy*, 96 U. S. 176; *Murray v. Charleston*, 96 U. S. 432; *Edwards v. Kearzey*, 96 U. S. 595; *Memphis v. U. S.*, 97 U. S. 293; *Rehoboth v. Hunt*, 1 Pick. 224; *Hestonville R. R. v. Phila.*, 89 Penn. St. 210; *Rock Hill College v. Jones*, 47 Md. 1; *Ratcliffe v. Anderson*, 31 Grat. 105; see *Williams v. Louisiana*, 103 U. S. 637; *Smith v. Cleveland*, 17 Wis. 556.

² *Roberts v. Cocke*, 28 Grat. 207; *Cecil v. Deyerle*, 28 Grat. 775; *Pretlow v. Bailey*, 29 Grat. 212; see, however, *McAdoo v. Smith*, 5 Baxt. 695. A bank in South Carolina suspended specie payments in Nov. 1860, and never after resumed, paying out its own bills for the last time in August, 1861, and after that date paying its debts only in confederate money.—It was held by a

majority of the judges of the supreme court of the United States that an act of the legislature of South Carolina legalizing the suspension of specie payments was unconstitutional; that the legislature could do no more than relieve the banks from the forfeitures of their charters; but that it could not relieve them from the obligation to pay their debts in specie nor extend the time for such payments. *Waite, C. J., Strong and Bradley, JJ., dissenting; Godfrey v. Terry*, 97 U. S. 171.

³ *Palairret's App.*, 67 Penn. St. 479.

⁴ *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 4 Wheat. 518; *Vincennes Univ. v. Indiana*, 14 How. 268; *McGee v. Mathis*, 4 Wall. 143; *Grammar School v. Burt*, 11 Vt. 632; *Brown v. Hummel*, 6 Barr, 86; *University of North Carolina v. Foy*, 1 Murph. 58.

⁵ *Northwestern University v. People*, 99 U. S. 309.

lative process, without due judicial action, be withdrawn.¹—A charter of a railroad corporation, also, cannot be repealed unless the power be reserved;² although such corporation, when a common carrier, may, as we will hereafter see, be subject to limitation as such.³ It must be recollected, at the same time, that charters, being grants of power subtracted from the people as a body in favor of selected individuals, are to be construed strictly so as to pass no privileges which are not expressly given.⁴ An important distinction, also, is to be observed in this respect between grants of franchises by a state and a contract between individuals. A compact between individuals is from the nature of things ephemeral and ten-

¹ *Gordon v. Tax Court*, 3 How. 133; *Planters' Bank v. Sharp*, 6 How. 301; *Curran v. Arkansas*, 15 How. 304; *People v. Manhattan Co.*, 9 Wend. 351; *Bank of State v. Bank of Cape Fear*, 13 Ired. 75. But see *Mechanics' Bank v. Debolt*, 1 Oh. St. 591; *Knoup v. Piqua Bank*, 1 Oh. St. 603, reversed in 16 How. 369.—By the charter of the Bank of Tennessee, granted by the legislature of that state in 1838, it was provided that the state should receive the notes of the bank in payment of taxes. By a constitutional amendment adopted in 1865, it was provided that the issues of the bank during the insurrectionary period were void, and their receipt for taxes was forbidden. It was held by a majority of the supreme court of the United States that the amendment was void as impairing the obligation of the contract embodied in the charter. *Keith v. Clark*, 97 U. S. 454.

² *Greenwood v. R. R.*, S. Ct. U. S. 1882, 25 Alb. L. J. 448.

³ That a franchise of a bridge or ferry company may be taken away, and either resumed or elsewhere distributed, upon compensation given, was held in *West River Bridge v. Dix*, 6 How. 507; *White River Turnpike Co. v. R. R.*, 21 Vt. 590; *Boston Water*

Power Co. v. R. R., 23 Pick. 360; *Enfield Bridge Co. v. R. R.*, 17 Conn. 40, 451; *Beekman v. R. R.*, 3 Paige, 45. That a promise by a legislature not to tax a particular franchise or property may be revoked was maintained in *Piscataqua Bridge v. N. H. Bridge*, 7 N. H. 69; *Debolt v. Ins. Co.*, 1 Oh. St. 563; *Knoup v. Piqua Bank*, 1 Oh. St. 603; which, however, were reversed by the supreme court of the United States in *Piqua Bank v. Knoup*, 16 How. 369; and see *Armington v. Barnet*, 15 Vt. 751; *Osborne v. Humphrey*, 7 Conn. 335; *State v. Hoboken*, 43 N. J. L. 96. That where a charter exempts a corporation from taxation, taxation cannot subsequently be imposed, see *Northwestern University v. People*, 99 U. S. 309; *Lansing v. Muscatine Co.*, 12 Int. Rev. Rec. 56; 1 Dillon, 522. That a statute giving precedence to the lien of taxes is constitutional, see *Lydecker v. Palisade Co.*, 33 N. J. Eq. 415. That state taxation which abrogates existing contracts is unconstitutional, see *Murray v. Charleston*, 96 U. S. 432.

⁴ *Supra*, §§ 137 *et seq.* 666, 672; *Richmond R. R. Co. v. Louisa R. R. Co.*, 13 How. 81-5; *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*, 11 Pet. 420.

tative; the contracting parties soon die, and, at least in a generation, so far as they are concerned, the engagement ceases to operate. But grants of franchises from the state, if under the shelter of the limitation before us, are of perpetual continuance. No matter how great may be the change of surrounding circumstances, or how injurious these privileges may become to the community as a whole, they will continue to exist if so protected. Hence it becomes peculiarly important, in applying the limitation, to keep in mind the rule that when there are two equally probable constructions open to a grant of a charter by the sovereign, the construction which parts with the least portion of sovereignty is to be preferred.¹

§ 1064. We have already seen that the question whether engagements restricting trade are to be regarded as contracts depends upon public policy.² The same distinctions are applicable to grants of exclusive privileges. It is true that it has been ruled by the supreme court of the United States that a condition in a bridge charter providing that it shall not be lawful to build another bridge within the range of two miles, is a contract the state cannot recall.³ But it may be replied that this decision rests on a *petitio principii*; since, if such an engagement is unduly restrictive of trade, it is not, on the reasoning above given,⁴ a contract, and hence is not within the scope of the limitation before us.⁵ On this distinction may be sustained the more recent rulings of the same court

Whether exclusive privileges are open to revision is a matter of public policy.

¹ *Supra*, § 666.

² *Supra*, §§ 430 *et seq.*

³ *Binghamton Bridge in re*, 3 Wall. 51; three judges dissenting.

⁴ *Supra*, § 433.

⁵ See *Beer Co. v. Mass.*, 97 U. S. 25; *Central Corporation v. Lowell*, 15 Gray, 106; *English v. R. R.*, 32 Conn. 240; *U. S. v. Great Falls Co.*, 21 Md. 119; *Schurmeier v. R. R.*, 10 Minn. 82.—In *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*, 11 Pet. 420, it was held that a charter to a company for the building of a bridge over Charles River, giving it a

right to take tolls for seventy years, did not give such a franchise as would make unconstitutional a subsequent charter to a new company to erect a bridge within a few rods of the Charles River Bridge, although this worked a great diminution of the income of the latter bridge. On this question the supreme court of Massachusetts was equally divided. S. C., 7 Pick. 344. See 3 Pars. on Cont. 536, citing as confirming the rule in 11 Pet. 420; *West River Bridge v. Dix*, 6 How. 532; *White River Co. v. R. R.*, 21 Vt. 590;

to the effect that it is within the power of a state legislature to prescribe restrictions, not in themselves unreasonable, on the charges of railroad corporations acting as common carriers under charters granted by the state.¹—Two extremes are to be noted on the question of legislative and judicial interference with contracts, whether contained in charters or in transactions between individual citizens. On the one side, a statute providing that all contracts shall be invalid, would unquestionably conflict with the constitution. On the other side, it could not be maintained that a statute providing that “contracts” (inaccurate as the term in such a case might be) to do an illegal act would be invalid, since a bargain to do an illegal act is not a contract,² and hence not within the protection of the limitation. The same criticism may be made as to statutes providing that “contracts” by persons decreed to be insane or spendthrifts, shall not be valid; it would be a *petitio principii* to declare such bargains “contracts,” since the question at issue is whether such persons are capable of contracting.—Between these extremes lie a series of intermediate cases, in which bargains have been declared inoperative as against the policy of the law.³ How far statutes and decisions which abrogate contracts in cases of this class are in conflict with the limitation of the constitution, is a question which must be determined on the distinctive merits of each particular case. There can be no doubt, for instance, that statutes making invalid contracts for the sale of intoxicating liquors are constitutional.⁴ On the other hand, there may be serious

Mohawk Bridge v. R. R., 6 Paige, 554; *Thompson v. R. R.*, 3 Sandf. Ch. 625; *Tuckahoe Canal Co. v. Tuckahoe R. R.*, 11 Leigh, 42; *Harrison v. Young*, 9 Ga. 359. Though see distinction by Curtis, J., in *Richmond R. R. v. Louisa R. R.*, 13 How. 71.

¹ *Munn v. Illinois*, 94 U. S. 113; *Chicago, etc. R. R. v. Iowa*, 94 U. S. 155; *Peik v. R. R.*, 6 Biss. 177; 94 U. S. 164; *Chicago, etc. R. R. v. Ackley*, 94 U. S. 179; *Winona, etc. R. R. v. Blake*, 19 Minn. 434; 94 U. S. 180; *Stone v. Wisconsin*, 94 U. S. 181;

Union Pacific R. R. v. U. S., 99 U. S. 700, 719. That in matters of police the promotion of the general welfare of the community justifies the modifying of a grant, see *Phalen v. Virginia*, 8 How. 163; *Beer Company v. Massachusetts*, 97 U. S. 25; *Vanderbilt v. Adams*, 7 Cow. 349; *Hirn v. Ohio*, 1 Oh. St. 15; *Pierce on Railroads*, 468–9.

² *Supra*, §§ 335 *et seq.*

³ *Supra*, §§ 414, 430, 442 *et seq.*

⁴ *Beer Company v. Massachusetts*, 97 U. S. 25.

doubts as to the constitutionality of legislation annulling contracts for the buying up by middlemen of produce or other commodities.¹—It may be said that such legislation would be operative, if not as to antecedent, at least as to subsequent contracts. But this would not be true if the effect be materially to impair the liberty of contracting on the part of individuals. The question is one of police. If the bargain be to do an act in itself injurious to the health, or morals, or peace of the community, then it may be prohibited in harmony with the provision before us. But it cannot be prohibited merely because the state legislature, its object not being *per se* wrongful or prejudicial to the state, makes that object illegal.

§ 1065. In the constitutions of several states, it is provided that in all charters granted by the state the right of repeal or of amendment is reserved; and a clause to this effect is now included in most cases in charters granted in states in which no such constitutional restriction obtains. In some states such reservations are part of the general system of legislation, in subordination to which all charters are issued.² When such limitations exist, they control all charters granted while they are in force.³

¹ *Supra*, §§ 442, 453 b.

² See *Beer Co. v. Massachusetts*, 97 U. S. 25; *Stanley v. Stanley*, 26 Me. 191; *Jones Man. Co. v. Com.*, 69 Penn. St. 137; *State v. Greer*, 9 Mo. Ap. 219. See for an examination of such exceptions, *Greenwood v. R. R.*, Sup. Ct. U. S. 1882, 25 Alb. L. J. 448.

³ *Harper v. Ampt*, 32 Ohio St. 291.

By the code of Georgia, private corporations are subject to be changed, modified, or destroyed, at the will of the legislature, except so far as forbidden by law, and in all cases of private charters granted after the adoption of the code, the state reserves the right to withdraw the franchise unless such right be expressly negatived in the charter. Some time after this code took effect, two railroad corporations

created prior to that date, each of which enjoyed by its charter a limited exemption from taxation, were consolidated by virtue of an act of the state legislature, which authorized a consolidation of the stock of the two companies, conferred upon the consolidated company full corporate powers, and continued to it the franchises and privileges and immunities which the companies had held by their original charters. It was held by the supreme court of the United States (1) that by the consolidation the original companies were dissolved and a new corporation was created, which became subject to the provision of the code; (2) that a subsequent legislative act taxing the property of such new corporation as other property in the state

§ 1066. Grants to municipal corporations, and to other public corporations for public purposes, may be revoked as not contracts within the sense of the limitation.¹ It is otherwise as to grants of private property, or private franchises, or private trusts.² The distinction is, that while property transferred to a municipal corporation cannot be recalled by the state, the mode of the public use of such property can be controlled by legislation, and to this control are subjected all franchises given to a municipal corporation for public use.³

§ 1067. How far, under the limitation before us, taken in connection with the authority given to congress to enact a bankrupt law, the states can by general legislation relieve creditors from the payment of debts, is a question which it is not within the range of the present work to discuss in detail. At present it must be sufficient to say that it is within the constitutional power of the states to pass exemption laws, exempting specific property from execution, provided this does not materially impair the remedy;⁴ laws modifying the effect of antecedent mechanics' liens, leaving the debt open to suit at common law;⁵ laws modifying the appraising of property on foreclosure of antecedent mortgages;⁶ laws modifying process for antecedent debts, *e. g.*, abolishing imprisonment for debt;⁷ and laws which take away specific remedies, leaving other adequate remedies in force.⁸ But a statute providing that a sale shall not be

was taxed was not in conflict with the constitutional limitation protecting contracts. *Atlantic & Gulf R. R. Co. v. Georgia*, 98 U. S. 359.

¹ *Terrett v. Taylor*, 9 Cranch, 43; *People v. Morris*, 13 Wend. 325; *Trustees v. Tatman*, 13 Ill. 27; *Mills v. Williams*, 11 Ired. 558; *Wallace v. Sharon*, 84 N. C. 164.

² *Terrett v. Taylor*, 9 Cranch, 43; *Pawlet v. Clark*, 9 Cranch, 292; *Bailey v. New York*, 3 Hill, N. Y. 531; *Fort Plain, etc. Co. v. Smith*, 30 N. Y. 44.

³ *East Hartford v. Bridge Co.*, 10 How. 511; *S. C.*, 17 Conn. 79.

⁴ *Morse v. Goold*, 1 Kern. 281; *Rockwell v. Hubbell*, 2 Doug. 197; *Taylor v. Stockwell*, 66 Ind. 505; see *Tarpley v. Hamer*, 9 Sm. & M. 310.

⁵ *Templeton v. Horne*, 82 Ill. 491.

⁶ *Jones v. Davis*, 6 Neb. 33.

⁷ *Penniman in re*, 103 U. S. 714; *S. C.*, 11 R. I. 333; *Sturges v. Crowinshield*, 4 Wheat. 122; *Beers v. Haughton*, 9 Pet. 359; *Ware v. Miller*, 9 S. C. 13.

⁸ *Jackson v. Lamphire*, 3 Pet. 288; *Bronson v. Kinzie*, 1 How. 315; *McCracken v. Hayward*, 2 How. 608; *Tennessee v. Sneed*, 96 U. S. 69; *Memphis, etc. R. R. v. Tennessee*, 101 U. S. 337;

made under an execution unless the property levied on should bring two-thirds of a valuation attached to it by appraisers, has been held unconstitutional in respect to debts incurred prior to the passage of the act;¹ and so of a statute relieving a bank from the duty of paying specie on its notes.² And state insolvent laws, undertaking to discharge antecedent debts, are inoperative,³ and so are laws so far exempting the debtor's property from execution as materially to impair his liability for antecedent debts,⁴ and staying execution for any extended period on antecedent debts,⁵ or putting other material obstacles in the way of their collection,⁶ or virtually precluding recovery on them.⁷

State v. Gaillard, 11 S. C. 309; 101 U. S. 433; *Louisiana v. New Orleans*, 102 U. S. 203; *Koshkoning v. Burton*, 104 U. S. 668; *Newark Savings Inst. v. Forman*, 33 N. J. Eq. 436; *Long's Appeal*, 87 Penn. St. 114; *Richardson v. Arkin*, 87 Ill. 138; *Watts v. Everett*, 47 Iowa, 269; *Northwest. Ins. Co. v. Neeves*, 46 Wis. 147; *Whitehead v. Latham*, 83 N. C. 232; *Horne v. State*, 84 N. C. 362; *Carnes v. Red River Parish*, 29 La. An. 608; *Vance v. Vance*, 32 La. An. 186.

A state funding act, which excludes from its operation certain bonds, supposed to be tainted with illegality, until their legality is established in court, is not, although affecting *bona fide* holders, in conflict with the limitation. *New York Guaranty Co. v. Board of Liquidation*, U. S. Sup. Ct. 1882; 4 Morris. Trans. 508.

Where the statute of Alabama subjecting the state to suit in its own courts was in force at the time when a contract with it was made and a suit thereon brought, but the functions of the courts were essentially those of a board of audit, and the plaintiff had no means of enforcing the payment of a judgment or a decree in his favor, it was held that the repeal of the statute de-

prived the court of jurisdiction to proceed, and was not in violation of the contract clause of the constitution of the United States. *South & North Ala. R. R. Co. v. Alabama*, 101 U. S. 832. See *Memphis, etc. R. R. v. Tennessee*, 101 U. S. 337.

¹ *McCracken v. Hayward*, 2 How. 608.

² *Godfrey v. Terry*, 97 U. S. 171.

³ *Sturges v. Crowninshield*, 4 Wheat. 122; *Farmers', etc. Bank v. Smith*, 6 Wheat. 131; *Ogden v. Saunders*, 12 Wheat. 213; *Planters' Bank v. Sharp*, 6 How. 301; *aliter* as to debts after the passage of the act, *Eckstein v. Shoemaker*, 3 Whart. 15.

⁴ *Lewis v. Lewis*, 47 Penn. St. 127; *Baldwin v. Flagg*, 43 N. J. L. 495; *Barnes v. Barnes*, 8 Jones L. 366; *Wilson v. Brown*, 58 Ala. 62.

⁵ *McClain v. Easley*, 4 Baxt. 520; *Bunn v. Gorgas*, 41 Penn. St. 441; *Williams's Appeal*, 72 Penn. St. 214.

⁶ *U. S. v. Lincoln Co.*, 5 Dill. 184; *U. S. v. Johnson Co.*, 5 Dill. 207; *West. Ark. Bk. v. Sebastian Co.*, 5 Dill. 414; *Olmstead v. Kellogg*, 47 Iowa, 460; *McCracken v. Moody*, 33 Ark. 81.

⁷ *People v. Otis*, 24 Hun, 519; *Edwards v. Kearzey*, 96 U. S. 595; *New Orleans v. City Hotel*, 28 La. An. 423.

§ 1068. Whether a state law discharging under insolvent procedure binds contracts elsewhere to be performed, or the parties to which are elsewhere domiciled, are questions which are discussed in another work. It may be here stated that a state has a right to bind its domiciled citizens, and all other consenting parties, so far as concerns future contracts, by legislation of this character, but not other persons. It is also settled that parties domiciled in other states, whether contractors or endorsees or purchasers, are not barred by such insolvent discharges from the fact that the debt is payable in the discharging state.¹ But where there is a contract between two citizens of the same state, one of whom subsequently removes to another state, the removal does not relieve the creditor removing from an insolvent discharge by the first state.²

State discharges do not bind citizens of other states.

§ 1069. It is agreed on all sides that marriage is not within the limitation before us. Divorces may be granted by states having jurisdiction irrespective of the question of the place where the marriage was solemnized.³

Marriage not within the limitation.

¹ Wh. Conf. of Laws, 2d ed. §§ 525 *et seq.*, and cases there cited.

² *Stoddard v. Harrington*, 100 Mass. 87; and see generally *Baldwin v. Hale*, 1 Wal. 223.

In *Guernsey v. Wood*, 130 Mass. 503, A., the agent of C., the plaintiff, a resident of Pennsylvania, sold goods in Massachusetts to defendant, a resident there, who supposed A. to be P., the principal. Afterward D., who had not paid for the goods, was discharged from liability for his debts under the insolvent law of Massachusetts. C. did not consent to the discharge or take part in the proceedings therefor. In an action by C. to recover the price of the goods, it was ruled that the discharge could not be set up by D. the defendant. The contract, it was argued, being in fact made by the plaintiff's agent in his behalf, he had the

right to sue thereon. Of that right he could not be deprived by the insolvent law of Massachusetts without his consent. He did not give such consent by the making of a contract in this commonwealth, either by himself or through an agent, even if the contract is to be performed here. "The fact that the certificate of discharge obtained by the defendant under that law might have been pleaded in bar of an action brought by the agent cannot make it available in this action brought by the principal, who is not a citizen of the commonwealth and is not bound by that law." The court (Gray, C. J., giving the opinion) relied on *Baldwin v. Hale*, 1 Wall. 223; *Baldwin v. Bank of Newbury*, *id.* 234; *Kelley v. Drury*, 9 Allen, 27; *Ilseley v. Merriam*, 7 Cush. 242; *Fessenden v. Willey*, 2 Allen, 67.

³ Wh. Conf. of Laws, §§ 223 *et seq.*

§ 1070. Claims arising from torts (*e. g.*, damage to property by a mob, for which a prior statute had created responsibility), are not within the limitation; and statutes modifying such responsibility are constitutional.¹

And so as to torts.

§ 1071. Nor do the engagements made by state or municipality with public officers constitute a contract within the purview of the limitation before us. The salaries of such officers may be reduced or their terms of office closed by action of legislature, of municipality, or of constitutional convention.²

Tenure of public office may be modified by law but not specific contracts.

On the other hand, a contract between a state and a party, whereby he is to perform certain duties for a specific period, at a stipulated compensation, is so far within the protection of the limitation that he cannot be deprived of such compensation by the repeal of the statute under which the contract was made.³

¹ *State v. New Orleans*, 32 La. An. 709. *Com. v. Mann*, 5 W. & S. 418; *Barker v. Pittsburgh*, 4 Barr, 49; *Whittington*

² *Butler v. Pennsylvania*, 10 How. 402; *Warner v. People*, 2 Denio, 272; *Conner v. N. Y.* 2 Sandf. 355; 1 Seld. 285; *Com. v. Bacon*, 6 S. & R. 322; *v. Polk*, 1 Har. & J. 236; *McBlair v. Bond*, 41 Md. 137; *Toledo Bank v. Bond*, 1 Oh. St. 622.

³ *Hall v. Wisconsin*, 103 U. S. 5.

TABLE OF CASES.

A.		SECTION	SECTION	
Abbey v. Dewey, 25 Penn. St.	413		Adams v. Lindsell, 1 B. & Ald.	681
	239, 243, 443			13, 15, 18, 317
Abbot v. Bayley, 6 Pick.	89	81	v. Mail Co., 5 C. B. N. S.	492
v. Hermon, 7 Greenl.	118,	7,		882
		708	v. Nichols, 19 Pick.	275
v. Smith, 2 W. Bl.	947	832		311,
Abbott v. Dermott, 34 Ga.	227	250		314, 322, 326
v. Draper, 4 Denio,	51	742	v. Reeves, 68 N. C.	134
v. Mackinley, 2 Miles,	220	84		149
v. Marshall, 48 Me.	44	683	v. Shelby, 10 Ala.	478
v. Rose, 62 Me.	194	185		288
v. Shepard, 48 N. H.	14	4, 9,	v. Stevens, 49 Me.	362
	18, 19,	494		206,
Abbotts v. Barry, 2 Brod. & B.	369	732, 735		211, 291
Abell v. Douglass, 4 Denio,	305	198	v. Torbert, 6 Ala.	865
v. Warren, 4 Vt.	149	36, 48,		573
		68, 69	v. Warner, 23 Vt.	395
Aberaman Iron Works v. Wick-				670
ens, L. R. 4 Ch. 101, reversing	5		v. Wordley, 1 M. & W.	374
Eq. 485	190, 244,	743		5
Aberdeen R. R. v. Blakie, 1 Macq.			Adams Bk. v. Anthony, 18 Pick.	238
H. L. 461		378		570 a
Ackenburgh v. McCool, 36 Ind.	473	378	Adams Ex. Co. v. Black, 62 Ind.	128
Ackert v. Barker, 131 Mass.	436	427		924
Ackland v. Lutley, 9 A. & E.	879	895	v. King, 3 Ill. Ap.	316
Adams, in re, L. R. 2 Pr. & M.	367	644		196
Adams' case, L. R. 13 Eq.	474	26	v. Reno, 48 Mo.	264
Adams v. Adams, 26 Ala.	272	871, 882		354
v. Barrett, 5 Ga.	404	454	v. Schlesinger, 75	
v. Brown, 16 Oh. St.	75	670		Penn. St. 246
v. Coulliard, 102 Mass.	167	343		945
v. Frothingham, 3 Mass.		352	Adamson v. Jarvis, 4 Bing.	66
		635		765
v. Frye, 3 Met.	103	695, 696	Aday v. Echols, 18 Ala.	353
v. Gay, 19 Vt.	358	382, 384,		3
		389, 454	Addinell's Case, L. R. 1 Eq.	225
v. Hamell, 2 Doug. (Mich.)		73		4
		382	Addington v. Allen, 11 Wend.	374
v. Hayes, 2 Ired. L.	361	494,		242, 282
		496	Addison v. Cox, L. R. 8 Ch.	76
v. Jacoway, 34 Ark.	542	180		845
v. Johnson, 15 Ill.	345	213, 224	v. Gandassequi, 4 Taunt.	574
v. Jones, 12 Pet.	207	570		811
v. Leavens, 20 Conn.	73	845	Adelphi Loan Ass. v. Fairhurst,	9
				Ex. 422
				52
			Adlard v. Booth, 7 C. & P.	108
				330,
				714, 748
			Adler v. State, 35 Ark.	517
				321
			Adye v. Hanna, 47 Iowa,	264
				427
			Ætna Bank v. Bank, 46 N. Y.	82
				836
			Ætna Ins. Co. v. Reed, 33 Oh. St.	283
				241, 264
			Agacio v. Forbes, 6 Moo. P. C.	160
				815
			Agawam Bk. v. Strever, 18 N. Y.	502
				870
			Agricultural Bk. v. Bissell, 12	Pick. 586
				467

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Aguilar v. Rodgers, 7 T. R.	421 657	Alexander v. Pierce, 10 N. H.	494 150
Ahearn v. Ayres, 38 Mich.	692 3	v. Smith, 4 Dev.	364 322,
Ahearne v. Hogan, Drury,	310 161		323
Ahern v. Goodspeed, 72 N. Y.	108 469	v. Vane, 1 M. & W.	
Aiken v. Blaisdell, 41 Vt.	655 343,	511	7, 835
	344, 364	Alford v. Irwin, 34 Ga.	25 321
v. Hyde, 99 Mass.	183 589	Alger v. Thacher, 19 Pick.	51 430
v. Short, 1 H. & N.	210 751	Alison, ex parte, L. R. 15 Eq.	394;
v. Tel. Co., 5 S. C.	358 438,	9 Ch. 1	298, 520, 742
	791, 1056	Allan v. Lake, 18 Q. B.	560 560
Aikin v. R. R., 26 Barb.	289 809	Allard v. Belfast, 40 Me.	369 558
Aiman v. Stout, 42 Penn. St.	114 158	v. Lamarande, 29 Wis.	502 427
Ainslie v. Medlycott, 9 Ves.	13 241		
v. Wilson, 7 Cow.	662 723, 768	Allcott v. Flour Mill, 9 Cush.	17 4
Alabama Ins. Co. v. Agricultural		Allen, ex parte, 15 Mass.	58 158
Assoc. 54 Ala.	73 138	v. Addington, 7 Wend.	9 238
Albany Dutch Church v. Brad-		v. Aldrich, 9 Foster (N. H.),	
ford, 8 Cow.	457 601	63	86
Albany Dutch Church v. Vedder,		v. Allen, 2 Dr. & War.	307 45
14 Wend.	165 570 a	v. Baker, 86 N. C.	91 324
Albert v. Lindau, 46 Md.	334, 930	v. Berryhill, 27 Iowa,	534 107,
Albrecht v. Sussman, 2 V. & B.			117
323	94, 473	v. Blunt, 2 Wood & M.	121 962
Aldborough v. Trye, 7 Cl. & F.		v. Booker, 2 Stew.	21 711
436	169	v. Culver, 3 Denio,	284 932
Alderson v. Langdale, 3 B. & Ad.		v. Deming, 14 N. H.	133 382,
660	700, 959		383, 384, 386
v. Maddison, L. R. 7 Q.		v. Duffie, 43 Mich.	1 388
B. D. 174, reversing		v. Gardiner, 7 R. I.	22 382
5 Ex. D. 293	216, 525	v. Hammond, 11 Pet.	63 179,
Aldous v. Cornwell, L. R. 3 Q. B.			181, 230, 298
573; 37 L. J. Q. B. 201	696, 700	v. Harris, 1 Ld. Raym.	122 999
Aldrich v. Albee, 1 Greenl.	120 619,	v. Hart, 72 Ill.	104 214, 241
	621, 885, 980, 990, 992	v. Hawks, 13 Pick.	79 427
v. Blackstone, 128 Mass.		v. Hearn, 1 T. R.	56 450
148	388	v. Ins. Co., 85 N. Y.	473 670
v. Brown, 103 Mass.	527 708	v. Jackson, L. R. 1 C. D.	
v. Campbell, 4 Gray,	284 842,	399	397
	1025	v. McKeen, 1 Sumner,	317 722
v. Grimes, 10 N. H.	194 36,	v. M'Masters, 3 Watts,	
	56, 58, 63	181	181
v. Jackson, 5 R. I.	218 744	v. Mining Co., 73 Mo.	688 927
v. Warren, 16 Me.	465 539	v. Minor, 2 Call,	70 41
Aldricks v. Higgins, 16 S. & R.		v. Pike, 3 Cush.	238 570
212	836	v. Pink, 4 M. & W.	140 910,
Alewyn v. Pryor, R. & M.	406 563		938
Alexander v. Americus, 61 Ga.	36 716	v. Rightmere, 20 Johns.	
v. Brown, 1 C. & P.		365	570 a
288	983	v. Sales, 56 Mo.	28 696
v. Burchfield, 7 M. &		v. Thomas, 3 Metc. (Ky.)	
G. 1061	953	198	784, 785
v. Gardner, 1 Bing. N.		v. Webb, 24 N. H.	278 604
C. 671	877, 879	v. Williams, 12 Pick.	297 793
v. Heriot, 1 Bailey Eq.		v. Woodward, 2 Fost. (N.	
223	58	H.) 544	708
v. Hoffman, 5 W. & S.		v. Yeater, 17 W. Va.	128 214
382	716	Allentown v. Saeger, 20 Penn.	
v. Hutcheson, 2 Hawks,		St. 421	149, 738
535	56, 63	Aller v. Aller, 40 N. J. L.	446 495
		v. Pennell, 51 Iowa,	537 603

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Allerton v. Allerton, 50 N. Y.		Ames v. Vose, 71 Me. 17	593
670	131, 270, 285	Amesbury v. Ins. Co., 6 Gray, 596	551
Alley v. Deschamps, 13 Ves. 225	890	Amesbury Man. Co. v. Amesbury,	
Alliance Bk. v. Brown, 2 Dr. &		17 Mass. 461	738
Sm. 289	532	Amey's App., 49 Penn. St. 126	719
Allies v. Probyn, 2 C. M. & R.		Amherst Acad. v. Cowls, 6 Pick.	
408	999	427	528
Allin v. Millison, 72 Ill. 201	259, 282	Ammon's App., 63 Penn. St. 284	377
Allis v. Billings, 6 Met. 415	36, 102,	Amonett v. Montague, 63 Mo. 201	634
	107	Amor v. Fearon, 9 A. & E. 548	718
v. Read, 45 N. Y. 142	4	Amory v. Brodrick, 5 B. & Ald.	
Allison's App., 77 Penn. St. 221	661,	712	606
	662, 664	v. Meryweather, 2 B. & C.	
Allison v. Ins. Co., L. R. 1 Ap.		573	351
Cas. 209	745	Amoskeag Bk. v. Moore, 37 N. H.	
v. R. R. 42 Iowa, 274	421,	589	573
	429	Anderson v. Armstead, 69 Ill. 452	89
Allkins v. Jupe, L. R. 2 C. P. D.		v. Com., 5 Rand. (Va.)	
375	352, 455	627	371
Allman v. Owen, 31 Ala. 167	390	v. Hamilton, 25 Penn.	
Allore v. Jewell, 94 U. S. 506	103,	St. 75	507
	159, 165, 167	v. Hill, 12 Sm. & M. 679	260
Allshouse v. Ramsay, 6 Whart.		v. Hillies, 12 C. B. 499	
331	637, 873, 990, 991		955, 957
Allsopp v. Wheatcroft, L. R. 15		v. Holmes, 14 S. C. 162	657
Eq. 59	430, 431, 433, 437	v. Ins. Co., L. R. 7 C. P.	
Alner v. George, 1 Camp. 392	844	65	215
Alston v. Durant, 2 Strobb. 257	149,	v. Longden, 1 Wheat.	
	354	85	784
v. Richardson, 51 Tex. 1	752,	v. Martindale, 1 East,	
	753	497	820
v. Wingfield, 53 Ga. 18	208	v. Moncrieff, 3 Desaus.	
Altschul v. San Francisco, 43 Cal.		124	725
171	202	v. Powell, 44 Iowa, 20	338,
Alvanley v. Kinnaird, 2 Mac. &			349
G. 1	186, 190, 207	v. Radcliffe, E. B. & E.	
Alvord v. Smith, 63 Ind. 58	452	806, 819	426
Ambrose v. Kerrison, 10 C. B.		v. R. R., 54 N. Y. 334	269,
776	757		275
Am. Bible Soc. v. Marshall, 15		v. State, 22 Oh. St. 305	945
Ohio St. 537	140	v. Turnpike Co., 16	
Am. Ex. Co. v. Schier, 55 Ill. 140	206	Johns. 86	996, 999
v. Willsie, 79 Ill. 92	291	v. Wallace, 3 Cl. & F.	
Am. Ins. Co. v. Capps, 4 Mo. Ap.		26	593
571	264	v. Weston, 6 Bing. N.	
v. Francia, 9 Barr,		C. 296	893
390	569	Anderton v. Shoup, 17 Oh. St.	
Am. Rapid Tel. Co. v. Telephone		125	202
Co., S. C. Conn. 1882; 13 Rep.		Anding v. Levy, 57 Miss. 51	368, 775
329	436	Andre v. Fletcher, 3 T. R. 266	352
Am. Steamship Co. v. Bryan, 83		Andres v. Lee, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq.	
Penn. St. 446	327	318	230
v. Young, 89		Andrew v. Dieterich, 14 Wend.	
Penn. St.		31	249, 258
186	149, 722,	Andrews, in re, L. R. 8 Q. B. 153	400
	738	v. Belfield, 2 C. B. N. S.	
Am. Trans. Co. v. Moore, 5 Mich.		779	591
368	327	v. Boyd, 3 Met. 434	513
Ames v. Armstrong, 106 Mass. 15	947	v. Campbell, 36 Oh. St.	
v. Chew, 5 Metc. (Mass.) 320	81	361	852

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Andrews v. Garrett, 6 C. B. N S.		Archibald v. Argall, 53 Ill. 307	620,
262	4		956
v. Hawley, 26 L. J. Ex.		Arden v. Patterson, 5 Johns. Ch.	
323	732	44	426
v. Ins. Co., 3 Mason, 6	207	Argenti v. San Francisco, 16 Cal.	
v. Ins. Co., 85 N. Y. 334	248	255	140
v. Ives, 3 Conn. 368	511,	Argoll v. Cheney, Palmer, 402	703
	512	Armendias v. Serna, 40 Tex. 291	445
v. Jones, 10 Ala. 400	161,	Armenia Ins. Co. v. Paul, 91	
	167	Penn. St. 520	217, 256
v. Poe, 30 Md. 485	461	Armfield v. Tate, 7 Ired. L. 258	345
v. Pond, 13 Pet. 65	463	Armington v. Barnet, 15 Vt. 745	1063
v. Rue, 34 N. J. L. 402	190,	Armistead v. Brooke, 18 Ark. 521	930
	836	Armitage v. Insole, 14 Q. B. 728	602,
v. Smith, 9 Wend. 53	684,		603
	860	v. Pulver, 37 N. Y. 494	765
v. Suffolk Bank, 12		Arms v. Ashley, 4 Pick. 71	540
Gray, 461	131	Armsby v. Farnham, 16 Pick. 318	862
Androsoggin Bk. v. Kimball, 10		Armstead, ex parte, 45 L. T. N. S.	
Cush. 373	196	557	953
Andrus v. Foster, 17 Vt. 556	719	v. Hundley, 7 Grat. 52	282
Angel v. McLellan, 16 Mass. 28	70	Armstrong v. Armstrong, 3 Myl.	
Angell v. McCullough, 12 R. I. 47	77	& K. 45	349
Angle v. Ins. Co., 92 U. S. 330	695	v. Lewis, 2 Cr. & M.	
Anglesea v. Rugeley, 6 Q. B. 107	305	274	349
Anglo Danubian St. Co. in re, L.		v. Toler, 4 Wash. C.	
R. 20 Eq. 339	135	C. 297; 11 Wheat.	
Anglo Egypt Nav. Co. v. Rennie,		258 339, 343, 346, 347,	
L. R. 10 C. P. 271	300, 326, 745	354, 443, 509, 771	
Annis v. Bonar, 86 Ill. 128	376	Arnold v. Arnold, L. R. 14 Ch. D.	
Anspach v. Bast, 52 Penn. St. 356	311	270	190
Anthon v. Fisher, 2 Doug. 649 n.	473	v. Bainbridge, 9 Ex. 153	1021
Apgar v. Hiler, 4 Zab. 812	765	v. Camp, 12 Johns. 409	949
App v. Coryell, 3 P. & W. 494	452	v. Delano, 4 Cush. 33	317
Appleby v. Johnson, L. R. 9 C.		v. Iron Works, 1 Gray,	
P. 158	4, 5	434	106, 107
v. Myers, L. R. 2 C. P.		v. Lyman, 17 Mass. 400	507
651, reversing 1 C. P.		v. Park, 8 Bush, 3	504, 1002
615	300, 322, 326, 547,	v. Poole, 4 M. & G. 860	2, 930
	714	v. Potter, 22 Iowa, 194	463
Applegate v. Koons, 74 Ind. 247	934	v. Prout, 51 N. H. 587	877
Appleton v. Bascom, 3 Metc.		v. Spurr, 130 Mass. 347	85
(Mass.) 169	765, 768	v. United States, 9 Cranch,	
v. Binks, 5 East, 148	810 a	104	885
v. Campbell, 2 C. & P.		v. Woodhams, L. R. 16	
347	374	Eq. 29	77
v. Chase, 19 Me. 74	13,	Arnot v. Biscoe, 1 Ves. 95	254
	523, 524, 620	v. Coal Co., 68 N. Y. 558	442
v. Hogan, 9 B. Mon. 69	990	v. R. R., 67 N. Y. 315	139
		Arnsby v. Woodward, 6 B. & C.	
Appleton Bk. v. Bertschy, 52 Wis.		519	615
438	259	Arrott v. Brown, 6 Whart. 9	722, 724
Arbuckle v. Thompson, 37 Penn.		Arthur v. Cole, 56 Md. 100	397
St. 170	792	v. Wynne, L. R. 14 Ch.	
Archer v. Bogue, 3 Scam. 526	814	D. 603	309, 312
v. Dunn, 2 W. & S. 327	463,	Ash v. Pouppeville, L. R. 3 Q. B.	
	653, 1021	86	966
v. Hudson, 7 Beav. 551	157,	v. Putnam, 1 Hill (N. Y.),	
	161, 162	302	258, 262
v. McCray, 59 Ga. 546	467	Ashburn v. Poulter, 35 Conn. 553	983

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Ashburner v. Parrish, 81 Penn. St. 52	403	Atlantic, etc. R. R. v. Georgia, 98 U. S. 359	1065
Ashbury R'way Car. Co. v. Riche, L. R. 7 H. L. 653	129, 135, 137, 139	Atlantic, etc. Tel. Co. v. Barnes, 64 N. Y. 385	570 a
Ashby v. Ashby, 7 B. & C. 444	727	Atlantic, etc. Tel. Co. v. R. R., 1 McCrary, 541	437
v. James, 11 M. & W. 542	780, 930, 933, 965	Atlas Bank v. Bank, 3 Metc. (Mass.) 581	353
Ashcraft v. De Armond, 44 Iowa, 229	107, 111	v. Brownell, 9 R. I. 168	570 a
Ashley's case, L. R. 9 Eq. 263	287	Atlee v. Backhouse, 3 M. & W. 683	149, 533, 733
Ashmole v. Wainwright, 2 Q. B. 837	149, 738	Attenborough v. Dock Co., L. R. 3 C. P. D. 450	292
Ashton v. Dakin, 4 H. & N. 867	453	Attleborough v. Middleborough, 10 Pick. 378	938
v. Stock, L. R. 6 C. D. 719	731	Attleborough Bk. v. Rogers, 125 Mass. 339	142
Asiatic Banking Co., ex parte, L. R. 2 Ch. 391	25 a, 801, 846	Att'y Gen. v. Brazen Nose Coll., 2 Cl. & F. 295	202
Askins v. Com. 1 Duvall, 275	321	v. Drummond, 1 Dr. & W. 353	202, 653
Aspden v. Seddon, L. R. 10 Ch. 394	657	v. Great Eastern R. R., L. R. 11 Ch. D. 449 ; 5 App. Cas. 473	137, 674
Aspden v. Austin, 5 Q. B. 671	674	v. Great North. R. R., 1 Dr. & Sm. 154	135
Associated Firemen's Ins. Co. v. Assum, 5 Md. 165	338 a	v. Parnther, 3 Bro. C. C. 441	109, 110
Astley v. Reynolds, 2 Str. 915	149, 353, 469	v. Sitwell, 1 Y. & C. 559	208
Athol v. Mallon, 43 N. Y. 147	443	v. Sothon, 2 Vern. 497	144
Athenæum Ass. v. Pooley, 3 De G. & J. 294	846	Attwood v. Small, 6 Cl. & F. 232	217, 242, 246, 250, 270, 674
Athens v. Thomas, 82 Ill. 259	128	Atwell v. Milton, 4 Hen. & M. 253	832
Atherfold v. Beard, 2 T. R. 610	449	Atwood v. Chapman, 68 Me. 38	254
Athol Music Hall v. Carey, 116 Mass. 471	528, 808	v. Clark, 2 Greenl. 249	882
Atkin v. Acton, 4 C. & P. 208	717, 718	v. Cobb, 16 Pick. 227	882
Atkins v. Banwell, 2 East, 505	512	v. Emery, 1 C. B. N. S. 110	882, 886
v. Barnstable, 97 Mass. 428	589, 714	v. Vincent, 17 Conn. 575	765
v. Brown, 59 Me. 90	810 a	v. Weeden, 12 R. I. 293	450
v. Ins. Co., 5 Metc. (Mass.) 439	895	Aubert v. Maze, 2 B. & P. 371	354
Atkinson v. Brown, 20 Me. 67	882	v. Walsh, 3 Taunt. 277	354
v. Cummins, 9 How. 479	202, 668	Aubery v. Fiske, 36 N. Y. 47	357
v. Denby, 7 H. & N. 934	353	Auburn Bk. v. Hunsiker, 72 N. Y. 252	958
v. Hawdon, 2 Ad. & E. 628	959	v. Lewis, 75 N. Y. 516	933
v. Medford, 46 Me. 510	113	Auditor v. Ballard, 9 Bush, 572	24
v. Ritchie, 10 East, 530	311, 367	Auerbach v. Mill Co., S. C. Minn. 1881 ; 13 Rep. 51	137, 138
v. Smith, 14 M. & W. 695	581, 606	Aultman v. Richardson, 7 Neb. 1	202, 810
v. Water Works, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 441	786, 812	Aurentz v. Anderson, 3 Pittsb. 310	109
Atkyns v. Horde, 1 Burr. 60	654	Auriol v. Thomas, 2 T. R. 52	467
v. Kinnier, 4 Exch. 776	433	Aurora City v. West, 7 Wall. 82	936
Atlantic Bank v. Merchants' Bank, 10 Gray, 532	138		
Atlantic Dock Co. v. Leavitt, 54 N. Y. 35	786 a		
Atlantic, etc. R. R. v. Bank, 19 Wall. 548	206		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Aurora Soc. v. Paddock, 80 Ill.	263	Bachdell's App., 56 Penn. St.	386 467
	138, 141	Bache v. Proctor, 1 Doug.	382 554
Austin v. Daniels, 4 Denio,	299 141	Bachelder v. Fisk, 17 Mass.	464
v. Dorwin, 21 Vt.	38 1002		765, 769, 832
v. Female Sem., 8 Metc.	196 33	Backenstoss v. Stahler, 33 Penn.	
v. R. R., 16 Q. B.	600 572	St. 251	267
v. Sawyer, 9 Cow.	39 910	Backentoss v. Speicher, 31 Penn.	
v. Searing, 16 N. Y.	112 416	St. 324	258
v. Steamboat Co., 43 N. Y.	75 309	Backman v. Jenks, 55 Barb.	468 877
v. Walsh, 2 Mass.	405 814	Backus v. Byron, 4 Mich.	535 422
Australian Clipper Co. v. Moun-		Bacon v. Bonham, 33 N. J. Eq.	
sey, 4 K. & J.	733 135	614	169
Austyn v. McLure, 4 Dall.	226 516	v. Bronson, 7 Johns. Ch.	
Averbeck v. Hall, 14 Bush,	505 483	194	242
Averill v. Hedge, 12 Conn.	424 18	v. Brown, 1 Bibb,	334 931
Avery v. Bowden, 5 E. & B.	714	v. Brown, 4 Bibb,	91 285
	559, 885 a	v. Frisbie, 15 Hun,	26 260
v. Halsey, 14 Pick.	174 405	v. Ins. Co., 31 Miss.	116 138
v. Pixley, 4 Mass.	460 896	v. Lamb, 4 Col.	578 963
v. Russell, 125 Mass.	571 844	v. Markley, 46 Ind.	116 264
v. Stewart, 2 Conn.	69 897	Badger v. Badger, 2 Wall.	87 288
v. Vansickle, 35 Ohio St.		v. Bank, 26 Me.	428 141
270	77	v. Gilmore, 33 N. H.	361 513
v. White, 1 Ld. Ray.	38 210	v. Phinney, 15 Mass.	359
Aycinena v. Peries, 6 W. & S.	243 ;		47, 48 a, 53
2 Barr,	286 729	v. Titcomb, 15 Pick.	409 708
Ayer v. Bartlett, 9 Pick.	156 584	Badgley v. Beale, 3 Watts,	263 344
v. Hawkins, 19 Vt.	26 930	Baehr v. Wolf, 59 Ill.	470 354
v. Warren, 47 Me.	217 76, 81	Baglehole v. Walters, 3 Camp.	
Ayers's Appeal, 28 Penn. St.	179	154	218, 229
	16 b, 528	Bagnall v. Carlton, L. R.	6 C. D.
Ayers v. Hewett, 19 Me.	281 36, 235, 285	371	254, 255 a
Ayerst v. Jenkins, L. R.	16 Eq.	Bagshaw v. R. R., 7 Hare,	114 137
275	352, 373	v. Seymour, 18 C. B.	903 237
Aylesford v. Morris, L. R.	8 Ch. 484	Bagster v. Portsmouth, see Baxter	
	160, 169	Bagueley v. Hawley, L. R.	2 C. P.
Ayre's case, 25 Beav.	513 275	625	230
Ayres v. R. R., 52 Iowa,	478 500, 514	Baham v. Bach, 13 La.	287 267
Azémar v. Casella, L. R.	2 C. P.	Bailey v. Austrian, 19 Minn.	535 524
431, 677	189, 225, 560, 907, 914	v. Barnberger, 11 B. Mon.	
		113	50
		v. Bidwell, 13 M. & W.	73 539
		v. Bussing, 28 Conn.	455 765
		v. Cowles, 86 Ill.	333 1001
		v. Croft, 4 Taunt.	611 505
		v. Day, 26 Me.	88 504, 935, 997
		v. Finch, L. R.	7 Q. B. 34 1022
		v. Haines, 13 Q. B.	815 757, 767
		v. Harris, 12 Q. B.	905 364
		v. King, 1 Whart.	113 720
		v. Long, 24 Kan.	90 869
		v. New York, 3 Hill (N.Y.)	
		531	1066
		v. O'Mahony, 33 N. Y. Sup.	
		Ct. 239	357
		v. Simonds, 6 N. H.	159 882
		v. Smock, 61 Mo.	213 243, 245
		v. Taylor, 11 Conn.	531 698
		Baileyville v. Lowell, 20 Me.	178
			532, 536

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bailiffs of Romney Marsh v. Trinity House, L. R. 5 Exch. 208	309	Baker v. White, 2 Vern. 215	396
Baillie v. Moore, 8 Q. B. 489		v. Whiting, 3 Sumner, 475	422
	504, 858, 997	Balch v. Ashton, 54 Iowa, 123	657
Baily's Case, L. R. 5 Eq. 428; 3 Ch. 592	9	Baldwin v. Ashby, 54 Ala. 82	269
Baily v. De Crespigny, L. R. 4 Q. B. 180	305, 311, 321	v. Bank, 1 Wall. 234	810a, 1068
Bain v. Brown, 56 N. Y. 285	161	v. Dunton, 40 Ill. 188	98, 110
v. Lyle, 68 Penn. St. 60	310	v. Flagg, 43 N. J. L. 495	1067
Bainbridge v. Firmstone, 8 A. & E. 743	517	v. Hale, 1 Wall. 223	1068
v. Pickering, 2 W. Black. 1325	70	v. Ins. Co., 10 Ins. L. J. 433	338a
Bainbrigg v. Browne, L. R. 18 Ch. D. 188	161, 163	v. Kerlin, 46 Ind. 426	3
Baines v. Woodfall, 6 C. B. N. S. 657	4	v. Leonard, 39 Vt. 260	811
Bakeman v. Pooler, 15 Wend. 637	983	v. Palmer, 6 Selden, 232	509
Baker v. Arnot, 67 N. Y. 448	230	v. Steamship Co., 74 N. Y. 125	149, 737
v. Baker, L. R. 5 P. D. 142; 6 P. D. 12	113, 113a, 116	v. Van Deusen, 37 N. Y. 487	220
v. Baker, 12 Cal. 87	265	Bales v. Hyman, 57 Miss. 330	1022
v. Bradley, 7 De G. M. & G. 597	161	Ball, ex parte, L. R. 10 Ch. D. 667	484, 486
v. Chase, 6 Hill (N. Y.) 482	399	v. Dunsterville, 4 T. R. 313	528, 680
v. Cincinnati, 11 Oh. St. 534	738	v. Gilbert, 12 Met. 397	450, 452, 729
v. Dewey, 1 B. & C. 704	938, 1031	v. Mannin, 3 Bligh, N. S., 1; 1 Dow. & C. 380	98, 110
v. Drake, 66 N. Y. 518	709	v. Newton, 7 Cush. 599	719
v. Farris, 61 Mo. 389	415, 483	v. Shell, 21 Wend. 222	733
v. Frellsen, 32 La. An. 822	852	v. Stanley, 5 Yerg. 199	985
v. Greenhill, 3 Q. B. 148	762	Ballard v. Bennet, 2 Burr. 775	416
v. Heard, 5 Exch. 959	1034	v. McKenna, 4 Rich. Eq. 358	103
v. Higgins, 21 N. Y. 397	899	v. Nooks, 2 Pike, 45	999
v. Howell, 6 S. & R. 476	723	Ballin v. Dillaye, 37 N. Y. 35	77
v. Humphrey, 101 U. S. 494	378	Ballinger v. Bourland, 87 Ill. 513	470
v. Ins. Co., 12 Gray, 603	311	v. Edwards, 4 Ired. Eq. 449	469
v. Jewell, 6 Mass. 460	814, 822	Ballou v. Talbot, 16 Mass. 461	810a
v. Johnson, 42 N. Y. 126	305, 311	Balme v. Hutton, 9 Bing. 471	739
r. Johnson Co., 37 Iowa, 186	4	v. Wombough, 38 Barb. 352	463
v. Jordan, 73 N. C. 145	266, 399	Balt. Build. Co. v. Smith, 54 Md. 187	902
v. Lever, 67 N. Y. 304	284, 286	Balt. Ins. Co. v. M'Fadon, 4 H. & J. 31	1021
v. Loader, L. R. 16 Eq. 49	161	Balt. etc. R. R. v. Glenn, 28 Md. 287	637
v. Lovett, 6 Mass. 78	68	Bancroft v. Dumas, 21 Vt. 456	365, 930
v. Mair, 12 Mass. 121	567	v. Grover, 23 Wis. 463	803
v. Massey, 50 Iowa, 399	199, 206	Bane v. Detrick, 52 Ill. 19	144, 150
v. Matlack, 1 Ashm. 68	380	Baney v. Killmer, 1 Barr, 80	285
v. Morton, 12 Wall. 150	144, 147, 150	Bangor v. Warren, 84 Me. 324	954
v. Roberts, 14 Ind. 552	165	Bank of America v. Banks, 101 U. S. 240	89
v. Sampson, 14 C. B. N. S. 383	86, 92	Bank of Australasia v. Breillat, 6 Moore, P. C. 152	338
v. Stackpoole, 9 Cow. 420	924, 931, 933	Bank of Beloit v. Beale, 34 N. Y. 473	288
v. Stinchfield, 57 Me. 363	936, 1007		
v. Townsend, 7 Taunt. 422	486		
v. Walker, 14 M. & W. 465	532, 956		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bank of Cal. v. Tel. Co., 52 Cal.		Bank of U. S. v. Dandridge,	12
280	791, 1056	Wheat. 64	128, 141
Bank of Cape Fear v. Wright, 3		v. Daniel, 12 Pet.	
Jones, N. C. 376	810 a	32	198, 264
Bank of Chillicothe v. Chillicothe,		v. Housman, 6 Paige,	
7 Ohio, 354	138	526	376
v. Swayne, 8		v. Owens, 2 Pet. 527	
Ohio, 257	128	129, 345, 360, 362	
Bank of Columbia v. Patterson,		v. Waggener, 9 Pet.	
7 Cranch, 299	128	378	466
Bank of Commerce v. Hoeber, 14		Bank of Utica v. Bender, 21 Wend.	
Cent. L. J. 298	380	643	573
Bank of Cumberland v. Mayberry,		v. Wager, 2 Cow.	
48 Me. 198	386	712	464
Bank of Genesee v. Patchin, 13 N.		Bank of the Valley v. Stribling, 7	
Y. 309	130	Leigh, 36	467
Bank of Georgia v. Lewin, 45		Bankart v. Bowers, L. R. 1 C. P.	
Barb. 340	463	484	581, 606
Bank of Hindustan v. Alison, L.		Banker v. Banker, 63 N. Y. 409	113,
R. 6 C. P.			123
222	298, 742	Bankhead v. Alloway, 6 Cold. 56	241
v. Smith, 36		Banks v. Goodfellow, L. R. 5 Q.	
L. J. C. P.		B. 549	98, 110
241	696, 702	v. Haskie, 45 Md. 207	887, 888
Bank of Kentucky v. Adams Ex.		v. Poitiaux, 3 Rand (Va.)	
Co., 93 U.		136	128, 142
S. 174	572	Bannerman v. White, 10 C. B. N.	
v. Bank, 1		S. 844	218
Pars. Cas.		Banorgee v. Hovey, 5 Mass. 11	684
180	141	Bantz v. Basnett, 12 W. Va. 772	957
Bank of Louisiana v. Coster, 3 N.		Baptist Church v. Mulford, 3	
Y. 203	25 a	Halst. L. 182	128
Bank of the Metropolis v. Sprague,		Barbaro v. Occidental Grove, 4	
20 N. J. Eq. 159	267, 443	Mo. Ap. 429	786
Bank of Michigan v. Niles, Wal-		Barbe v. Parker, 1 H. Bl. 283	963
ker (Mich.) 99	139	Barber v. Britton, 26 Vt. 112	269
Bank of Monroe v. Field, 2 Hill		v. Brown, 1 C. B. N. S.	
(N. Y.) 445	133	121	752
Bank of Montreal v. Thayer, 2		v. Fox, 2 Wms. Saund.	
McCrary, 1	237	136	535
Bank of Northern Liberties v.		v. Pott, 4 N. & H. 759	750
Cresson, 12 S. & R. 306	137	v. Wood, L. R. 4 Ch. D. 885	669
Bank of Oxford v. Kirk, 90 Penn.		Barden v. Keverberg, 2 M. & W.	
St. 49	151 a, 483	61	76, 237
Bank of Penna. v. Potius, 10		Bardewell v. Colie, 1 Lans. 141	230
Watts, 148	954	Bardwell v. Lydall, 7 Bing. 489	925
Bank of Pittsburgh v. Neal, 22		Barelli v. Brown, 1 McC. 449	954
How. 96	185	Barfield v. Price, 40 Cal. 535	186, 284
Bank of the Republic v. Baxter,		Barford v. Stuckey, 2 Brod. & B.	
31 Vt.		333	788
101	254	Barger v. Collins, 7 Har. & J. 213	
v. Millard,			778, 840
10 Wall.		Barham v. Turbeville, 1 Swan.	
152	836	437	53
Bank of Rochester v. Emerson, 10		Baring v. Clark, 19 Pick. 220	269
Paige, 359	199	v. Corrie, 3 B. & A. 137	945
Bank of St. Mary's v. Calder, 3		Barker v. Barker, 14 Wis. 131	429
Strobh. 403	130	v. Bradley, 42 N. Y. 316	786
Bank of U. S. v. Bank of Georgia,		v. Bucklin, 2 Denio, 45	785,
10 Wheat, 333	744, 985		853, 865

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Barker v. Circle, 60 Mo. 258	89	Barney v. Newcomb, 9 Cush. 46	25 a
v. Dinsmore, 72 Penn. St. 427	183, 283, 292	v. Saunders, 16 How. U. S. 535	726
v. Halifax, Cro. Eliz. 741	514	Barns v. Graham, 4 Cow. 452	987
v. Hodgson, 3 M. & S. 267	306, 367	Barnwell v. Kempton, 22 Kan. 314	712
v. Ins. Co., 3 Wend. 94	810 a	Baron v. Placide, 7 La. An. 229	630
v. Janson, L. R. 3 C. P. 303	455	Barr v. Gibson, 3 M. & W. 390	223
v. Packenhoon, 2 Wash. C. C. 142	983	v. Myers, 3 W. & S. 295	872, 990, 991, 992
v. Pittsburgh, 4 Barr, 49	1071	Barrell <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 10 Ch. 512	743, 747
v. Richardson, 1 Y. & J. 362	821, 950, 1038	v. Trussell, 4 Taunt. 117	532
v. St. Quinton, 12 M. & W. 441	1032	Barrett v. Allen, 10 Ohio, 426	897
v. Stubbs, 1 M. & G. 44	819	v. Buxton, 2 Aiken, 167	120
v. Vansommer, 1 Bro. C. C. 149	467	v. Deere, M. & M. 200	945
v. Windle, 6 E. & B. 675	215	v. French, 1 Conn. 354	655
Barkley v. Hanlan, 55 Miss. 606	494, 535	v. Hartley, L. R. 2 Eq. 789	170
Barkworth v. Young, 4 Drew. 1	328	v. Hyde, 7 Gray, 160	453
Barlow v. Bishop, 1 East, 432	84	v. Ins. Co., 7 Cush. 175	786, 837
v. Browne, 16 M. & W. 126	507, 728, 732	v. Lewis, 2 Pick. 123	934
v. Ins. Co., 4 Met. 270	532	v. R. R., 45 N. Y. 628	998
v. Scott, 24 N. Y. 40	4	v. Warren, 3 Hill, 348	736
v. Wiley, 3 A. K. Marsh, 457	259, 261	Barrick v. Buba, 2 C. B. N. S. 563	94, 473, 559
Barnard v. Backhaus, 52 Wis. 593	442, 453, 454	Barrie v. Smith, 47 Mich. 130 ; 12 Rep. 787	608, 615
v. Campbell, 65 Barb. 286 ; 55 N. Y. 456 ; 58 N. Y. 73	185, 258, 291, 793	Barron v. Alexander, 27 Mo. 530	249
v. Colwell, 39 Mich. 215	730	v. Barron, 24 Vt. 375	395
v. Field, 46 Me. 526	343	v. Tucker, 53 Vt. 338	415
v. Kellogg, 10 Wall. 383	630, 631, 915	Barry v. Cavanagh, 127 Mass. 394, 130 Mass. 436	1029
v. Lee, 97 Mass. 92	203, 888, 889, 892	v. Croskey, 2 J. & H. 1	237
Barnoord v. Kuhn, 36 Penn. St. 383	678	v. Foyles, 1 Peters, 317	833
Barndollar v. Tate, 1 S. & R. 160	799	v. Harris, 49 Vt. 392	205
Barnes v. Bank, 19 N. Y. 152	133	v. Page, 10 Gray, 398	794
v. Barnes, 8 Jones, L. 366	1067	v. Palmer, 19 Me. 303	290
v. Braithwaite, 2 H. & N. 569	738	v. Ransom, 12 N. Y. 462	765
v. Brown, 80 N. Y. 527	378	v. Whitney, 3 Sandf. 696	161
v. Hathaway, 66 Barb. 452	106	Barthell v. Roderick, 34 Iowa, 517	210
v. Ins. Co., 51 Me. 110	338 a	Bartholomew v. Bently, 15 Ohio, 659	237
v. Perine, 9 Barb. 202	9, 16, 528	v. Finnemore, 17 Barb. 428	48
v. Wyethe, 28 Vt. 41	265	v. Jackson, 20 Johns. 28	22, 494, 507
Barnet v. Offerman, 7 Watts, 130	539	v. Markwick, 15 C. B. N. S. 711	712
Barnett, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 3 Ch. D. 123	183	Bartle v. Coleman, 4 Pet. 184	362
Barney v. Bliss, 1 D. Chip. 399	987	v. Saunders, 2 Grant (Penn.) 199	252
v. Clark, 22 Pitts. L. J. 5169		v. Wheeler, 49 N. H. 9	140
		Bartlett v. Blaine, 83 Ill. 25	243
		v. Cowles, 15 Gray, 445	48
		v. Drake, 100 Mass. 174	48, 233, 285, 681, 919
		v. Gas Co., 117 Mass. 533	202
		v. Hoppock, 34 N. Y. 118	227
		v. Ins. Co., 46 Me. 500	670

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bartlett v. Pearson, 29 Me. 9	842, 844	Baxter v. Portsmouth, 2 C. & P.	
v. Pentland, 10 B. & C.		178; 5 B. & C. 170; 7	
760	943	D. & R. 614	101, 106, 107
v. Tucker, 104 Mass. 336	277, 1046	Bayard v. McLane, 3 Harring. 139	421, 422, 427
v. Wells, 1 B. & S. 836	52, 54	Bayler v. Com'th, 40 Penn. St. 37	495
v. Wyman, 14 Johns. 260	503	Bayley v. Homan, 3 Bing. N. C.	915
Barton v. Morris, 15 Ohio, 408	340	v. R. R., L. R. 7 C. P. 415	131
v. Piggott, L. R. 10 Q. B.	86	v. Rimmell, 1 M. & W. 506	711, 718
v. Plank Road, 17 Barb.	397	v. Taber, 5 Mass. 286	340, 344
v. Wells, 5 Whart. 225	533	v. Wilkins, 7 C. B. 886	709
Barwick v. Bank, L. R. Ex. 259	131, 141, 214, 269, 270, 275	Baylie v. Clare, 2 Brownl. 275	151 a
Bass v. White, 65 N. Y. 565	882, 885, 890, 897	Baylies v. Fettyplace, 7 Mass. 325	305
Bassett v. Bassett, 55 Me. 125	695	Baylis v. Dinely, 3 M. & S. 477	31, 36, 38
v. Brown, 105 Mass. 551	284, 285	Bayliss v. Williams, 6 Cold. 440	161
v. Hughes, 43 Wis. 319	785, 853	Bayly v. Lawrence, 1 Bay, 499	318, 319
v. Porter, 10 Cush. 418	141	Bazeley v. Forder, L. R. 3 Q. B.	559
Bast v. Bank, 101 U. S. 93	207	Beach v. Beach, 2 Hill (N. Y.),	260
v. Byrne, 51 Wis. 531	718	v. Bemis, 107 Mass. 498	214
Batard v. Hawes, 2 E. & B. 287	765, 767, 768	v. Church, 96 Ill. 177	12, 528
Batchelder v. Sargent, 47 N. H.	262	v. Hayward, 10 Ohio, 455	818
Bate v. Payne, 13 Q. B. 900	759	v. Hotchkiss, 2 Conn. 697	814, 822
Bateman v. R. R., L. R. 1 C. P.	499	v. R. R., 37 N. Y. 457	27, 634
Bates v. Ball, 72 Ill. 108	118	v. Vandenburg, 10 Johns.	361
v. Butler, 46 Me. 387	150	Beadle v. Munson, 30 Conn. 175	467
v. Churchill, 32 Me. 31	871, 987	Beal v. Brown, 13 Allen, 114	765
v. Graves, 2 Ves. Jr. 287	285	Beall v. McGhie, 57 Ala. 438	198, 264
v. Hewitt, L. R. 2 Q. B. 595	245	v. Poole, 27 Md. 645	677, 679, 863
v. Ins. Co., 3 Johns. Cas.	238	Beals v. Olmstead, 24 Vt. 114	221, 561, 905, 906
v. R. R., 10 Allen, 251	680	v. See, 10 Barr, 56	103, 105, 106
v. Townley, 2 Ex. 152	756, 762	Beaman v. Buck, 9 Sm. & M. 207	711
Bathe v. Taylor, 15 East, 412	700	v. Russell, 20 Vt. 205	698
Batson v. Newman, L. R. 1 C. P.	D. 573	Bean v. Amsinck, 10 Blatch. 361	353
Batterbury v. Vyse, 2 H. & C. 42	594	v. Atwater, 4 Conn. 3	579
Battles v. Laudenslager, 84 Penn.	St. 446	v. Herriok, 12 Me. 262	245
Batturs v. Sellers, 5 H. & J. 117;	6 H. & J. 249	v. Miller, 69 Mo. 384	593, 594
Batty v. Marriott, 5 C. B. 818	451	Beans v. Bullitt, 57 Penn. St. 221	924
Bauer v. Roth, 4 Rawle, 83	185	Beard v. Dedolph, 29 Wis. 136	91
Baum v. Mullen, 47 N. Y. 577	83	v. Dennis, 6 Ind. 200	431
Baxendale v. R. R., 14 C. B. N. S.	1; 16 C. B. N. S. 137	v. Webb, 2 Bos. & Pul. 93	42, 76
v. Seale, 19 Beav. 601	207	Beardslee v. Morgner, 4 Mo. Ap.	139
Baxter v. Bush, 29 Vt. 465	53	v. Richardson, 11 Wend.	25
v. Duren, 29 Me. 434	744	Beardsley v. Root, 11 Johns. 464	722, 723
v. Gray, 3 M. & G. 771	719	Beasley v. Webster, 64 Ill. 458	785, 786, 853
v. Nurse, 6 M. & G. 935;	1 C. & K. 10	Beatty v. Ebury, L. R. 7 Ch. 777;	7 H. L. 102
	612, 718	Beauchamp v. Comfort, 42 Miss. 94	383

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Beauchamp v. Winn, L. R. 6 H.		Begbie v. Levi, 1 Cr. & J. 180	386
L. 223	199	v. Phosphate Co., L. R. 10	
Beaufort v. Neeld, 12 Cl. & F. 248		Q. B. 491; 1 Q. B. D.	
	196, 264	679 336, 340, 341, 376, 749	
Beaumont v. Greathead, 2 C. B.		Beggs v. Butler, 9 Paige, 226	824
494; 3 D. & L. P. C.		Behaly v. Hatch, Walker (Miss.),	
631	935, 949, 966	369	983
v. Reeve, 8 Q. B. 483		Behn v. Burness, 1 B. & S. 877; 3	
	373, 512, 513	B. & S. 751 212, 214, 241,	
Beaupland v. McKeen, 28 Penn.		556	
St. 124	6, 249	v. Kemble, 7 C. B. N. S.	
Beaupré v. Tel. Co., 21 Minn. 155	791	260	237
Beavan v. McDonnell, 9 Ex. 309		Behrens v. McKenzie, 23 Iowa,	
	106, 107, 111, 114	333	106
Beaver Co. v. Armstrong, 44 Penn.		v. R. R. 6 H. & N. 366	572
St. 63	797	Beirne v. Dord, 1 Seld. 95; revers-	
Beazley v. Mitchell, 9 Ala. 780	736	ing 2 Sandf. 89	914, 915
Bebbee v. Ins. Co., 25 Conn. 51	256	Belcher v. Belcher, 10 Yerg. 121	118,
Bechervaise v. Lewis, L. R. 7 C.			119
P. 372	1024	v. Conner, 1 S. C. 88	349
Becker v. Smith, 59 Penn. St. 469		v. Mills, 2 C. M. & R. 150	740
	887, 888	Belden v. Henriquez, 8 Cal. 87	249
Beckham v. Drake, 9 M. & W. 79	684	Belding v. Pitkin, 2 Caines, 147	370
Beckley v. Munson, 22 Conn. 299	765	v. State, 25 Ark. 315	306,
Beckner v. Carey, 44 Ind. 89	499		321
Beckwith v. Bullen, 8 E. & B. 683	1029	Belfast, etc., R. R. v. Unity, 62	
v. Cheever, 21 N. H. 41		Me. 148	4
	9, 10, 13, 18	Belknap v. Sealey, 2 Duer, 570	902
v. Frisbie, 32 Vt. 559	149	Bell, ex parte, 1 M. & S. 751	342
v. Howard, 6 R. I. 1	670	v. Bruen, 1 How. 169	555, 664,
Bedel v. Loomis, 11 N. H. 9	166, 516		667
Bedell's App., 87 Penn. St. 510	91	v. Cunningham, 3 Pet. 69	724
Bedford v. Bagshaw, 4 H. & N.		v. Ellis, 33 Cal. 620	249, 258
538	237	v. Gardiner, 4 Man. & G. 11	181,
v. Brutton, 1 Bing. N. C.			196, 197, 753
399	814	v. Ins. Co., 8 S. & R. 98	662
v. Deakin, 2 B. & Ald.		v. Lawrence, 51 Ala. 160	198
210	854	v. Leggett, 7 N. Y. 176	380
Beebe v. Johnson, 19 Wend. 500		v. Quin, 2 Sandf. 146	365, 402
	309, 311, 547	v. R. R., 15 Beav. 548	840
v. Knapp, 28 Mich. 53	241	v. Smith, 5 B. & C. 188	424
Beebee v. Robert, 12 Wend. 413	223	v. Wood, 1 Bay, 249	483
Beecham v. Smith, E. B. & E. 442		Bellairs v. Bellairs, L. R. 18 Eq.	
	806, 814, 825	510	396, 397
Beecher v. Conradt, 3 Kern. 108	558	Bellamy v. Sabine, 2 Phill. 425;	
Beekman v. R. R., 3 Paige, 45	1063	1 DeG. & J. 566	285, 290, 424
Beeler v. Young, 1 Bibb, 519	65, 68,	Bellas v. Hays, 5 S. & R. 427	887
	69, 70	Beller v. Jones, 22 Ark. 92	106
Beeley v. Wingfield, 11 East, 46	486	Bellows v. Russell, 20 N. H. 427	443
Beer Co. v. Massachusetts, 97 U.		v. Smith, 9 N. H. 285	979,
S. 25	1064, 1065		984
Beers v. Haughton, 9 Pet. 329	1067	v. Wells, 36 Vt. 599	298
v. Robinson, 9 Barr, 229	507,	Belote v. Henderson, 5 Cold. 471	144
	785, 786	Belshaw v. Bush, 11 C. B. 191	942,
Beeson v. Patterson, 36 Penn. St. 24	670		956, 959
Beeston v. Beeston, L. R. 1 Ex.		Belt v. Ferguson, 3 Grant, 289	399
D. 13	357	Beman v. Rufford, 1 Sim. N. S.	
v. Collyer, 4 Bing. 309	718	550	139
Beetem v. Burkholder, 69 Penn.		Bemis v. Call, 10 Allen, 512	89
St. 249	285	Benadum v. Pratt, 1 Oh. St. 403	80

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bender v. Sampson, 11 Mass. 42	495, 1032	Benwell v. Inns, 24 Beav. 307	433, 437
Bendix v. Wakeman, 12 M. & W. 97	77 a	Benyon v. Nettlefold, 2 Mac. & G. 94	373
Benedict v. Bachelder, 24 Mich. 425	382	Beresford v. Browning, L. R. 1 C. D. 30	766, 830, 832
v. Cowden, 49 N. Y. 396	662	Berg v. R. R., 50 Wis. 419	616
v. Ehler, Lewis Cr. L. 126	407	Bergen v. Udall, 31 Barb. 9	161
v. Ins. Co., 31 N. Y. 389	652	Bergey's Appeal, 60 Penn. St. 417	91
v. Lynch, 1 Johns. Ch. 370	3, 888, 890	Berkeley v. Hardy, 5 B. & C. 355	788
v. Miner, 58 Ill. 19	695	Berkeley Divinity School v. Jarvis, 32 Conn. 412	528
v. Montgomery, 7 W. & S. 238	377	Berkley v. Watling, 7 A. & E. 29 ; 2 N. & P. 178	793, 878
Benfield v. Solomons, 9 Ves. 77	469	Berkmeyer v. Kellerman, 32 Oh. St. 239	161
Benford v. Sanner, 40 Penn. St. 9	27	Berks, etc., Turnpike v. Myers, 6 S. & R. 12	128
Benham v. Bishop, 9 Conn. 330	63	Berkshire Bk. v. Jones, 6 Mass. 524	573
v. Cary, 11 Wend. 83	239	Berkshire Ins. Co. v. Sturgis, 13 Gray, 177	677
Benjamin v. Benjamin, 15 Conn. 347	84	Bernard v. Torrance, 5 Gill & J. 383	949
Benners v. Clemens, 58 Penn. St. 24	637, 709	Berndtson v. Strang, L. R. 4 Eq. 481	878
Benneson v. Aiken, 102 Ill. 284	677	Bernstien v. Ricks, 20 La. An. 409	697
Bennet v. Paine, 5 Watts, 259	533	Berrien v. McLane, 1 Hoff. (N. Y.) 421	161, 361
Bennett v. Bartlett, 6 Cush. 225	230	Berry v. Anderson, 22 Ind. 36	677
v. Beam, 42 Mich. 346	217, 248	v. Gillis, 17 N. H. 9	799
v. Brooks, 9 Allen, 118	388	Berryman v. R. R., 14 Bush, 755	408
v. Cadwell, 70 Penn. St. 253	684, 860	Berwick v. Horsfall, 4 C. B. N. S. 450	648
v. Ford, 47 Ind. 264	149	v. Oswald, 1 E. & B. 295	996
v. Francis, 2 B. & P. 550	975	Besancoon v. Shirley, 9 Sm. & M. 457	981
v. Ins. Co., 81 N. Y. 273	604	Besant, in re, L. R. 11 Ch. D. 508	400
v. Jenkins, 13 Johns. 50	899	Bessent v. Harris, 63 N. C. 542	337
v. Judson, 21 N. Y. 238	241, 270	Bessy v. Windham, 6 Q. B. 166	285
v. Robinson, 10 Watts, 348	397	Best v. Best, 1 Add. Ecc. 411	265
v. Solomon, 6 Cal. 134	495	v. Hill, L. R. 8 C. P. 10	1010
v. Stout, 98 Ill. 47	85	v. Jolly, 1 Sid. 38	511
v. Woolfolk, 15 Ga. 213	321	v. Stow, 2 Sandf. Ch. 298	187, 214
Benninger v. Hankee, 61 Penn. St. 343	557	Bestor v. Wathen, 60 Ill. 138	340, 414
Bensell v. Chancellor, 5 Whart. 371	107, 114	Beswick v. Swindells, 3 A. & E. 868	312, 325, 329
Bensley v. Bignold, 5 B. & Ald. 335	365	Bethell v. Sharp, 25 Ill. 173	268
Benson v. Cowell, 52 Iowa, 137	919	Bethlehem v. Fire Co., 81 Penn. St. 445	736
v. Drake, 55 Me. 555	382	Betterbee v. Davis, 3 Camp. 70	978
v. Lamb, 9 Beav. 502	892	Bettini v. Gye, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 183	558, 597
v. Monroe, 7 Cush. 125	754	Bettle v. Wilson, 14 Ohio, 257	395
v. Thompson, 27 Me. 470	756, 764	Betts's App., 10 Weekly Notes, 431	433
Bent v. Manning, 10 Vt. 225	69	Betts v. Carroll, 6 Mo. App. 518	48
Bentley v. Griffin, 5 Taunt. 356	84	v. Gibbins, 2 A. & E. 57	765
v. Mackay, 31 Beav. 143	207		
Benton v. Pratt, 2 Wend. 385	238		
Bentz v. Rockey, 69 Penn. St. 71	380 a		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Betts v. Perrine, 14 Wend. 219	604	Billiot v. Robinson, 13 La. An. 529	982
Beurmann v. Van Buren, 44 Mich. 496	876	Bills v. R. R. Assoc., 7 Baxt. 595	593
Bevan, <i>ex parte</i> , 9 Ves. 223	467	Bindley v. Mulloney, L. R. 7 Eq. 343	395, 614
Bevans v. Rees, 5 M. & W. 306	977, 978	Bingham v. Bingham, 1 Ves. Sen. 126	181, 199
Beverley's Case, 4 Coke, 123 b	115	v. Sessions, 6 Sm. & M. 13	148, 149, 150
Beverley v. Lincoln, 6 A. & E. 829	708	v. Stanley, 2 Q. B. 117	454
v. Walden, 20 Grat. 147	158	Binghamton Bridge, <i>in re</i> , 3 Wall. 51	1063
Bevins v. Hulme, 15 M. & W. 88	944	Binnard v. Spring, 42 Barb. 470	214
Bexwell v. Christie, 1 Cowp. 395	260	Binns v. Fisher, 43 L. J. C. 188	996
Beynon v. Cook, L. R. 10 Ch. 389	161, 169	Binstead v. Buck, 2 W. Bl. 1117	507
Bickel v. Sheets, 24 Ind. 1	345	Birkhead v. Brown, 5 Hill, 634 ; 2 Denio, 375	25 a
Bickerdike v. Bollman, 1 T. R. 405	573	Birleback v. Wilkins, 22 Penn. St. 26	795
Bickford v. Bank, 42 Ill. 238	810 a	Bird's App., 91 Penn. St. 68	282
v. Cooper, 41 Penn. St. 142	654	Bird, <i>ex parte</i> , 19 Cal. 130	382
Bidault v. Wales, 19 Mo. 36 ; 20 Mo. 546	258	v. Daggett, 97 Mass. 494	141, 269
Biddlecombe v. Bond, 4 A. & E. 332	638	v. Gammon, 3 Bing. N. C. 883	865
Bierce v. Stocking, 11 Gray, 174	520	v. Meadows, 25 Ga. 251	404
Bierer's App., 52 Penn. St. 265	256 a, 533	v. Pengrum, 13 C. B. 639	77 a
Biery v. Ziegler, 93 Penn. St. 367	506, 507, 785	v. Randall, 1 W. Bl. 387	832
Biffin v. Bignell, 7 H. & N. 877	88, 150	Bird's Trusts, <i>in re</i> , L. R. 3 Ch. D. 214	202, 210
Bigelow v. Barr, 4 Ohio, 358	199	Birdsey v. Butterfield, 34 Wis. 52	260
v. Benedict, 70 N. Y. 202	453, 453 a	Birdsong v. Birdsong, 2 Head, 289	103, 119
v. Collamore, 5 Cush. 226	311	Birkenhead R. R. v. Pilcher, 5 Exch. 121	40
v. Davis, 16 Barb. 561	507, 756	Birkley v. Presgrave, 1 East, 220	765
v. Folger, 2 Metc. 255	1026	Birmingham Banking Co., <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 6 Ch. 83	128
v. Grannis, 2 Hill (N. Y.), 120	63	Birney v. Tel. Co., 18 Md. 341	438
v. Jones, 10 Pick. 161 .	723	Bishop v. Chambre, M. & M. 116	698
v. Kinney, 3 Vt. 353	59	v. Church, 3 Atk. 691	1022
v. Wilson, 1 Pick. 485	895	v. Honey, 34 Tex. 245	343
Bigge v. Parkinson, 7 H. & N. 955	223, 906	v. Shepherd, 23 Pick. 492	42
Biggs v. Barry, 2 Curt. 259	249, 258	v. Small, 63 Me. 12	260
v. Harris, 64 N. C. 413	180	v. Stewart, 13 Nev. 25	290
v. Lawrence, 3 T. R. 454	445	v. White, 68 Me. 104	658, 661
v. Perkins, 75 N. C. 397	245	Bishop of London v. Ffytche, 1 East, 487	360
Bigler v. Flickinger, 55 Penn. St. 279	259, 282	Bissell v. Bissell, 11 Barb. 96	895
Biglow v. Leabo, 8 Oregon, 147	158, 282	v. Jones, L. R. 4 Q. B. 49	380
Bilbie v. Lumley, 2 East, 469	196, 198	v. R. R., 22 N. Y. 58, 258	136, 137, 138, 140, 141
Bilborough v. Holmes, L. R. 5 C. D. 255	863	Bixby v. Carskaddon, 55 Iowa, 533	239, 344, 380
Bill v. Porter, 9 Conn. 23	954, 956	v. Moor, 51 N. H. 402	338, 339
Billage v. Southee, 9 Hare, 534	161	v. Whitney, 5 Greenl. 192	872, 991, 992
Billings v. Vanderbeck, 23 Barb. 546	996, 1003	Bixler v. Ream, 3 Barr, 282	532
		v. Saylor, 68 Penn. St. 146	235
		Bize v. Dickason, 1 T. R. 285	752

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Blackford v. Preston, 8 T. R. 89	407,	Bledsoe v. Irvin, 35 Ind. 293	833
	408	Blen v. Bear River Co., 20 Cal. 602	282
Black v. Canal Co., 22 N. J. Eq.		Blennerhassett v. Sherman, Sup.	
130	136	Ct. U. S. 1882; 4 Mor. Trans.	
v. Hoyt, 33 Oh. St. 203	679	517	376, 379
v. Ridgway, 131 Mass. 80	748	Blight v. Ashley, Peters C. C. 15	983
v. Shreve, 13 N. J. Eq. 455	677,	v. Page, 3 B. & P. 295	306
	679	v. Schenck, 10 Barr, 285	
v. Tricker, 59 Penn. St. 13	76		677, 679
v. Whitall, 1 Stockt. 572	1013	Blinn v. Chester, 5 Day, 359	504, 1006
Blackburn v. Bell, 91 Ill. 434	340	Bliss v. Matteson, 45 N. Y. 22	376, 380
v. Randolph, 33 Ark.		v. Negus, 8 Mass. 46	511, 748
119	206	v. R. R., 24 Vt. 424	119
v. Smith, 2 Kx. 783	288,	v. Swartz, 7 Lans. 186	504
	748	Block v. Commissioners, 99 U. S.	
Blackie v. Clark, 15 Beav. 595	161	686	141
Blacklock v. Dobie, L. R. 1 C. P.		v. McMurry, 56 Miss. 217	382
D. 265	380	Blood, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 9 Eq. 316	864
Blackman v. Dowling, 63 Ala. 304	643	v. Enos, 12 Vt. 625	607
Blackmore v. Shelby, 8 Humph.		Bloom v. Kern, 30 La. An. Part II.	
439	161	1263	933
Blackstone Bank v. Hill, 10 Pick.		v. Richards, 2 Oh. St. 387	
129	924		382, 385
Blackwell v. Cummings, 68 N. C.		Bloomer v. Bernstein, L. R. 9 C.	
121	239	P. 588	580
v. Nash, 1 Str. 535	580	v. Spittle, L. R. 13 Eq.	
Bladen v. Wells, 30 Md. 577	870	427	190
Blades v. Free, 9 B. & C. 167	12, 87, 323	v. State, 48 Md. 521	344, 376
Blair v. Wilson, 28 Grat. 165	953	Bloss v. Bloomer, 23 Barb. 604	344
Blaisdell v. Lewis, 32 Me. 515	718	Blossom v. Barrett, 37 N. Y. 434	265
Blake's case, 6 Coke, 43 b	996	v. Knox, 3 Pinney, 262	899
34 Beav. 639	251, 282	Blowers v. Sturtevant, 4 Denio,	
Blake v. Blake, 110 Mass. 202	997, 1003	46	86
v. Buchanan, 22 Vt. 548	844	Bloxam v. R. R., L. R. 3 Ch. 337	
v. Coleman, 22 Wis. 415	697		139, 422
v. Crowninshield, 9 N. H.		Bloxsome v. Williams, 3 B. & C.	
304	895	232; 5 D. & R. 82	385, 386, 387
v. Langdon, 19 Vt. 485	1025	Bluck v. Gompertz, 7 Exch. 862	
v. Peck, 11 Vt. 483	533		696, 705
Blakeley v. Blakeley, 33 N. J. Eq.		Blumenberg v. Adams, 49 Cal. 308	81
502	107, 109, 117 a, 123	Blundell's Case, 7 Lond. L. J. 772	852
Blakeman v. Blakeman, 39 Conn.		Blunt v. Melcher, 2 Mass. 228	613
320	199, 208	v. Walker, 11 Wis. 334	128
Blakesley v. Smallwood, 8 Q. B.		Bly v. Bank, 29 Penn. St. 453	509
538	1022	Blydenburgh v. Welsh, 1 Baldw.	
Blanchard v. Dyer, 21 Me. 111	815	331	288
v. Noyes, 3 N. H. 518	935	Blymire v. Boistle, 6 Watts, 182	
v. Page, 8 Gray, 281	792, 793		784, 785
v. Tyler, 12 Mich. 339	733	Blystone v. Blystone, 51 Penn. St.	
Blanchet v. Collieries Co., L. R. 9		373	376
Ex. 74	793	Blythe v. Speake, 23 Tex. 429	
Blaney v. Hanks, 14 Iowa, 400	285		213, 219, 224
Blankenship v. Rogers, 10 Ind.		Boalt v. Brown, 13 Oh. St. 364	695
333	1021	Board of Education v. Greene-	
v. Stout, 25 Ill. 132	50	baum, 39 Ill. 609	128
Blant v. Gabler, 77 N. Y. 461	376, 377	Boardman v. Brown, 25 Iowa, 487	427
Blaxton v. Pye, 2 Wils. 309	452	v. Dean, 34 Penn. St.	
Bleaden v. Charles, 7 Bing. 246	759	252	677
Bleakley, <i>in re</i> , 5 Paige, 311	180	v. Jackson, 2 Ball & B.	
v. Smith, 11 Sim. 150	661	382	775

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Boardman v. Paige, 11 N. H. 431	765	Roone v. Eyre, 1 H. Bl. 273 n	558,
v. Reed, 6 Pet. 328	633		748
v. Roe, 13 Mass. 105	737	v. Eyre, 2 W. Bl. 1312	553
v. Spooner, 13 Allen,		Boorman v. Brown, 3 Q. B. 511	1043
353	877, 910	v. Jenkins, 12 Wend.	
Boast v. Firth, L. R. 4 C. P. 1	300,	566	223, 914
321, 323, 324, 613		Booth v. Bank, 7 Cl. & F. 509	362
Bobb v. Woodward, 50 Mo. 95	288	v. Hodgson, 6 T. R. 405	354,
Bobbett v. Pinkett, L. R. 1 Ex. D.			765
368	795	v. Mill Co., 60 N. Y. 487	311
Bobbitt v. Shryer, 70 Ind. 513	765	v. Mill Co., 74 N. Y. 15	554
Bobo v. Stickney, 36 Ala. 482	931	v. Powers, 56 N. Y. 22	239,
Bobo v. Hansell, 2 Bailey, 114	37, 62		377, 695
Boddington v. Schlencker, 4 B. &		v. Smith, 3 Wend. 66	853,
Ad. 752	953		1003
Bodenham v. Purchas, 2 B. & Ald.		v. Tyson, 15 Vt. 515	712,
391	933		898, 899
Bodine v. Killeen, 53 N. Y. 93	6, 78,	Boothby v. Scales, 27 Wis. 626	616
	249	v. Sowden, 3 Camp. 175	
Boehm v. Wood, 1 J. & W. 419	887		1001
Bogart v. Nevins, 6 S. & R. 369	722	v. Stanley, 34 Me. 515	698
Bogert v. Hertell, 4 Hill, 492; 9		Borden v. Borden, 5 Mass. 67	593,
Paige, 52	947		603, 983
Boggs v. Curtin, 10 S. & R. 211	826	Borell v. Dann, 2 Hare, 440	165, 518
v. Ins. Co., 30 Mo. 63	250, 256	Borland v. Guffey, 1 Grant	
Bohanan v. Pope, 42 Me. 93	784	(Penn.), 394	22
Bolingbroke v. Board, L. R. 9 C.		Bornstein v. Lans, 104 Mass. 214	4, 9
P. 575	131	Borradaile v. Hunter, 5 M. & G.	
Bolles v. Beach, 2 Zab. N. J. 680		639	670
	786 a	Borrekins v. Bevan, 3 Rawle, 23	212,
Bolton v. Bp. of Carlisle, 2 H. Bl.		223, 224, 225, 561, 914	
259	703, 704	Borries v. Bank. L. R. 9 C. P. 38	1023
v. Madden, L. R. 9 Q. B.		Bosanquet v. Wray, 6 Taunt. 597	
55	407, 517, 523, 530		807, 927, 929, 932
v. Street, 3 Cold. 31	462, 463	Bosler v. Bank, 4 Barr, 32	1022
Bomeisler v. Dobson, 5 Wharton,		v. Rheem, 72 Penn. St. 54	467
398	647	Bosley v. Porter, 4 J. J. Marsh,	
Bomier v. Caldwell, 8 Mich. 463	888	621	924
Bond v. Bond, 7 Allen, 1	110	v. Shanner, 26 Ark. 280	144
v. Bunting, 78 Penn. St. 210	496	Boston v. Benson, 12 Cush. 61	702
v. Clark, 35 Vt. 577	219	Boston Bank v. Chamberlin, 15	
v. Hays, 12 Mass. 36	469, 752	Mass. 220	58
v. Jones, 8 Sm. & M. 368	737	Boston Glass Co. v. Boston, 4 Met.	
v. Ramsey, 89 Ill. 29	242, 286	181	737
Bondurant v. Crawford, 22 Iowa,		v. Moore, 119	
40	214	Mass. 435	515
Bone v. Ekless, 5 H. & N. 925	354,	Boston Ice Co. v. Potter, 123 Mass.	
	357	28	180, 184, 708, 854
Bonner v. Marsh, 10 Sm. & M.		Boston, etc., R. R. v. Bartlett, 3	
376	793	Cush. 224	4, 10,
Bonnewell v. Jenkins, L. R. 8			11, 13, 494
Ch. D. 70	5	v. Dana, 1	
Bonney v. Seely, 2 Wend. 481	758,	Gray, 83	486
	765	Boston Water Power Co. v. R. R.,	
Boody v. Keating, 4 Me. 164	486	23 Pick. 360	1063
v. McKenney, 23 Me. 517	37,	Bostwick v. R. R., 45 N. Y. 712	309
48 a, 56, 58, 60, 63, 66		Boswell v. Green, 1 Dutcher, 390	946
Booe v. Watson, 13 Ind. 387	1021	Bosworth v. Frankberger, 15 Ill.	
Bool v. Mix, 17 Wend. 119	31, 56,	508	990
	60, 61, 63	Botkin v. Livingston, 21 Kan. 232	518

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Botsford v. Wilson, 75 Ill. 132	214	Bowman v. Carithers, 40 Ind. 90	246
Bottomley v. Forbes, 5 Bing. N. C. 121	637	v. Coffroth, 59 Penn. St. 19	403, 404
v. Nuttall, 5 C. B. N. S. 122	857, 860, 949, 954, 956	v. Cnrd, 2 Bush, 565	570 a
Boughton v. Standish, 48 Vt. 594	284	v. Hiller, 130 Mass. 153	146
Boulter, in re, L. R. 4 C. D. 241	207, 209	v. Ins. Co., 40 Md. 620	338 a
v. Peplow, 9 C. B. 493	765, 767, 835	v. Ins. Co., 27 Mo. 152	670
Boulton v. Dobree, 2 Camp. 163	94, 478	v. Miller, 25 Grat. 331	463
v. Jones, 2 H. & N. 564	180, 184, 854	v. Nichol, 5 T. R. 537	700, 705
Bourne v. Mason, 1 Vent. 6	506	v. Teall, 23 Wend. 306	310
v. Seymour, 16 C. B. 337	902	Bowring v. Stevens, 2 C. & P. 337	260
Bousfield v. Barnes, 4 Camp. 228	455	Bowry v. Bennett, 1 Camp. 348	374
v. Wilson, 16 M. & W. 185	357, 725	Bowser v. Bliss, 7 Blackf. 344	431, 433
Bouslough v. Bouslough, 68 Penn. St. 495	377	Bowyear v. Pawson, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 540	1021
Boussmaker, ex parte, 13 Ves. 71	476	Box v. Barnaby, Hob. 117 a	427
Boutelle v. Melendy, 19 N. H. 196	340, 384	Boyce v. Edwards, 4 Pet. 111	25 a
Bowdell v. Parsons, 10 East, 359	606, 995	v. Smith, 9 Grat. 704	110
Bowditch v. Green, 3 Met. 360	765, 769	Boyd v. Bopst, 2 Dall. 91	230
Bowen v. Bell, 20 Johns. 338	540	v. Boyd, 66 Penn. St. 283	161
v. Bradley, 9 Abb. N. Y. Pr. 395	463	v. Brinckin, 55 Cal. 427	6, 9
v. Buck, 28 Vt. 308	483	v. Browne, 6 Barr, 210	214, 239, 244
v. Cooper, 7 Watts, 311	417	v. De la Montagnie, 73 N. Y. 498	91, 161
v. Hall, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 333	809, 812	v. Ellis, 11 Iowa, 97	463
v. Morris, 2 Taunt. 374	810 a	v. Freize, 5 Gray, 553	532
v. Newell, 5 Sandf. 326	881	v. Gunnison, 14 W. Va. 1	882
v. Owen, 11 Q. B. 130	977, 979	v. Hind, 1 H. & N. 938	1005
v. School Dist., 36 Mich. 149	271	v. Hitchcock, 20 Johns. 76	504, 853, 1003, 1006
Bower v. Blessing, 8 S. & R. 243	22	v. Lett, 1 C. B. 222	584
Bowers v. Bowers, 20 Penn St. 74	378, 407, 408, 409	v. Siffkin, 2 Cowp. 326	555, 563, 597
v. Hurd, 10 Mass. 427	776	v. Wilson, 83 Penn. St. 319	223, 225, 904, 914
v. Jewell, 2 N. H. 543	695, 697	Boydell v. Drummond, 2 Camp. 157	824
Bowes v. Howe, 5 Taunt. 30	573	Boyden v. Boyden, 9 Met. 519	31, 32, 53, 56, 58
v. Shand, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 455	638	v. Moore, 5 Mass. 365	978, 979
v. Tibbetts, 7 Greenl. 457	730	Boyer v. Pack, 2 Denio, 107	753
Bowker v. Burdekin, 11 M. & W. 128	679	Boyle v. Webster, 17 Q. B. 950	824
v. Childs, 3 Allen, 434	504	Boynton v. Dyer, 18 Pick. 1	726
v. Hoyt, 18 Pick. 555	898, 899	v. Hubbard, 7 Mass. 112	169, 398, 407
v. Lowell, 49 Me. 429	147, 148, 150	v. Page, 13 Wend. 425	382
Bowles v. Stewart, 1 Sch. & L. 209	1035	Boys, in re, L. R. 10 Eq. 467	933
		Boyse v. Rossborough, 6 H. L. C. 2	159, 165
		Bozman v. Draughan, 3 Stew. 243	376
		Bracewell v. Williams, L. R. 2 C. P. 196	415, 535
		Brackett v. Mountfort, 2 Fairf. 115	695
		v. Norton, 4 Conn. 517	7, 708, 944

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bradburne v. Botfield, 14 M. & W. 559	817	Brantom v. Griffiths, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 212	643
Bradeen v. Brooks, 22 Me. 463	181	Brashier v. Gratz, 6 Wheat. 528	887, 888
Bradford v. Abend, 89 Ill. 78	113 a	Braunstein v. Ins. Co., 1 B. & S. 782	591
v. Beyer, 17 Oh. St. 388	235	Brawley v. U. S., 96 U. S. 168	902
v. Bush, 10 Ala. 386	215	Braynard v. Fisher, 6 Pick. 355	1017
v. Greenway, 17 Ala. 797	77	v. Marshall, 8 Pick. 194	843, 845
v. Manly, 13 Mass. 139	561, 742, 914, 938	Breckenridge v. Ormsby, 1 J. J. Marsh, 236	107
v. Williams, L. R. 7 Ex. 259	580, 607	Brecknock Co. v. Pritchard, 6 T. R. 750	318
Bradley v. Ballard, 55 Ill. 413	138, 139, 140, 141	Bredin's App., 92 Penn. St. 241	340, 370
v. Burwell, 3 Denio, 61	765	Bredin v. Dwen, 2 Watts, 95	70
v. Coolbaugh, 91 Ill. 148	444	Bree v. Holbec, Doug. 655	250
v. Fuller, 118 Mass. 239	243	Breed v. Hillhouse, 7 Conn. 523	513, 570
v. Gregory, 2 Camp. 383	1001	v. Hurd, 6 Pick. 356	983
v. King, 44 Ill. 339	580	v. Judd, 1 Gray, 455	42, 50, 64
v. Luce, 99 Ill. 234	282	v. Pratt, 18 Pick. 115	123
v. Pratt, 23 Vt. 378	66, 69	Breese v. Schuler, 48 Ill. 329	831
v. Rea, 14 Allen, 20 ; 103	382, 384	v. Tel. Co., 45 Barb. 274 ;	438, 572
v. Wheeler, 44 N. Y. 495	631	Breinig v. Meitzler, 23 Penn. St. 156	84, 86, 92
Bradshaw v. Beard, 12 C. B. N. S. 344	757	Bremner v. Hull, L. R. 1 C. P. 748	823
v. Davis, 12 Tex. 336	1003	Brent v. Brent, 10 L. J. Ch. 84	256 a
v. McLoughlin, 39 Mich. 480	505	v. State, 48 Ala. 297	199
Bradstreet v. Bank, 42 Vt. 128	140	Brenton v. Davis, 8 Blackf. 317	221, 905
Bradway's Estate, 1 Ash. 212	233, 338	Breslin v. Bown, 24 Oh. St. 565	443, 444
Brady's Appeal, 66 Penn. St. 277	159, 165	Bressler v. Kent, 61 Ill. 426	77
Brady v. Briscoe, 2 J. J. Marsh, 212	376	Bret v. J. S., Cro. Eliz. 756	494
v. Hill, 1 Mo. 315	932	Brett v. Close, 16 East, 293	405
Bragg v. Morrill, 49 Vt. 45	227	v. Clowser, L. R. 5 C. P. D. 376	270
v. Pierce, 53 Me. 65	999, 1003	Brewer v. Boston Theatre, 104 Mass. 378	139
Bramah v. Roberts, 3 Bing. N. C. 963	138	v. Dyer, 7 Cush. 337	507, 794
Braman v. Bingham, 26 N. Y. 483	679	v. Fleming, 51 Penn. St. 102	888, 983
v. Dowse, 12 Cush. 227	786 a	v. Marshall, 4 C.E.Green, 537	430
v. Hess, 13 Johns. 52	466	Brewster v. Baker, 20 Barb. 364	584
Bramley v. Alt, 3 Ves. 620	260	v. Brewster, 9 Vroom, 119	282
Brand v. Boulcott, 3 B. & P. 235	816	v. Burnett, 125 Mass. 68	744
Brandao v. Barnett, 12 Cl. & F. 787	795	Brice v. Hamilton, 12 S. C. 32	924, 927
Brandon v. Medley, 1 Jones Eq. 313	198	v. Stokes, 11 Ves. 319	940
v. Nesbitt, 6 T. R. 23	94, 350, 473, 477	Bridge v. Batchelder, 9 Allen, 394	282
v. Newington, 3 Q. B. 915	979	v. Cage, Cro. Jac. 103	502
v. Scott, 7 E. & B. 234	982	v. Eggleston, 14 Mass. 245	377
Brandt v. Bowlby, 2 B. & Ad. 932	877	v. Wain, 1 Stark, 410	187
v. Lawrence, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 344	900	Bridges v. Garrett, L. R. 5 C. P. 451	953, 1001
Bransom v. Stannard, 41 L. T. (N. S.) 434	4		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bridgewater Academy v. Gilbert, 2 Pick. 579	528	Brock v. Hidy, 13 Oh. St. 306	888
Bridgman v. Green, 2 Ves. Sr. 627	159	Brockenbrough v. Brockenbrough, 31 Grat. 580	376
Bridwell v. Brown, 48 Ga. 179	205	v. Ward, 4 Rand. 352	554
Briggs, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 1 Eq. 483	288	Brockway v. Allen, 17 Wend. 40	810a
v. Boyd, 56 N. Y. 289	149, 737	Brockwell's case, 4 Drew. 205	270, 275
v. Calverley, 8 T. R. 629	980	Brogden v. Marriott, 2 Bing. N. C. 473	593
v. Campbell, 25 Vt. 704	342	v. R. R., L. R. 2 Ap. Cas. 666	6, 18
v. Ewart, 51 Mo. 245	205	v. Walker, 2 H. & J. 285	159
v. Lewiston, 29 Me. 472	149	Bromley v. Brunton, L. R. 6 Eq. 275	496
v. McCabe, 27 Ind. 327	37	v. Smith, 26 Beav. 644	169
v. Parsons, 39 Mich. 400	953, 956	Bronson v. Gleason, 7 Barb. 472	872
v. R. R., 31 Vt. 211	705	v. Kinzie, 1 How. 311	1067
v. Sizer, 30 N. Y. 647	523	v. Wiman, 4 Selden, 182	990
v. Williams, 2 Vt. 283	929	Brook v. Hook, L. R. 6 Ex. 89	483
Brigham v. Lally, 130 Mass. 485	955	Brooke v. Haymes, L. R. 6 Eq. 25	1035
v. Mead, 10 Allen, 245	528, 595	Brooker v. Scott, 11 M. & W. 67	69
v. Shattuck, 10 Pick. 309	308	v. Wood, 5 B. & Ad. 1052	342
Bright v. Kynon, 1 Burr. 390	232	Brookes v. Drysdale, L. R. 3 C. P. D. 52	663
v. Legerton, 2 D. F. & J. 606	284	Brooklyn v. R. R., 47 N. Y. 475	786
Brighty v. Norton, 3 B. & S. 305	886	Brooklyn Bank v. De Grauw, 23 Wend. 342	977, 979, 999
Brind v. Hampshire, 1 M. & W. 365	728	Brookman's Trusts, <i>in re</i> , L. R. 5 Ch. 182	620
Brink v. Black, 77 N. C. 59	239, 377	Brooks v. Allen, 62 Ind. 401	695
Brinkerhoff v. Brinkerhoff, 8 C. E. Green, 477	89	v. Ball, 18 Johns. 337	13, 505, 516
Brinks v. Heise, 84 Penn. St. 246	377	v. Berryhill, 20 Ind. 97	150
Brinley v. Mann, 2 Cush. 337	134, 810a	v. Haigh, 10 A. & E. 323	516
v. Tibbetts, 7 Greenl. 70	290	v. Hamilton, 15 Minn. 26	214
v. Whiting, 5 Pick. 348	421	v. Hubbard, 3 Conn. 58	599
Brinsmead v. Harrison, L. R. 6 C. P. 584	7	v. Jennings, L. R. 1 C. P. 476	663
Brisban v. Boyd, 4 Paige, 17	18	v. Martin, 2 Wall. 70	343, 349, 473
Brisbane v. Adams, 3 N. Y. 129	443	v. Stuart, 9 Ad. & Kl. 854	831, 1035
v. Dacres, 5 Taunt. 143	754	v. White, 2 Metc. 283	504,
Bristol v. Braidwood, 28 Mich. 191	260	853, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1006	
Bristol Milling Co. v. Probasco, 64 Ind. 406	954	Brothers v. McCurdy, 36 Penn. St. 407	666
Bristow v. Towers, 6 T. R. 35	477	Broughton v. Broughton, 4 Rich. 491	340
Brit. and Am. Tel. Co. v. Colson, L. R. 6 Ex. 108	18	v. Hutt, 3 De G. & J. 501	181, 199
British Waggon Co. v. Lea, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 149	848	v. Mitchell, 64 Ala. 210	421, 643
Brittain v. Lloyd, 14 M. & W. 762	708, 756, 757, 758, 759	v. Silloway, 114 Mass. 71	945
Britten v. Hughes, 5 Bing. 460	380	v. Water Works, 3 B. & Ald. 1	136
Britton v. Bese, 23 Pitts. L. J. 181	427	v. Winn, 60 Ga. 486	259
v. Dierker, 46 Mo. 591	700	Broun v. Kennedy, 33 Beav. 133	161
v. Turner, 6 N. H. 481	714, 717	Brower v. Lewis, 19 Barb. 574	225
Brix v. Braham, 1 Bing. 281	512, 513		
Broad v. Munton, L. R. 12 Ch. D. 131	213		
Broadwater v. Darne, 10 Mo. 277	114, 118		
Broadwell v. Stiles, 3 Halst. 58	702		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Brown, <i>in re</i> , 2 Story, 502	881	Brown v. Lamphear, 35 Vt. 252	
v. Ackroyd, 5 E. & B. 819			206, 207
	86, 92	v. Leach, 107 Mass. 364	
v. Adams, L. R. 4 Ch. 764	933		244, 245
v. Bank, 3 Barr, 187	138	v. Lunt, 37 Me. 423	540, 683
v. Bank, 72 Penn. St. 209		v. McCune, 5 Sandf. 224	52, 53
	469, 1029	v. McGrau, 14 Pet. 480	670
v. Bennett, 75 Penn. St. 420	79	v. M'Kinally, 1 Esp. 279	740
v. Berry, 14 N. H. 459	871, 990	v. Maxwell, 6 Hill (N. Y.) 592	53
v. Bigelow, 10 Allen, 242	224	v. Mayor of London, 9 C. B. N. S. 726	305, 329
v. Blunt, 72 Me. 415	243	v. Montgomery, 20 N. Y. 287	254
v. Brine, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 5			254
	415, 483, 505, 508	v. Neal, 36 Me. 407	973
v. Bronson, 35 Mich. 415	399	v. North, 21 Mo. 528	233
v. Brooks, 25 Penn. St. 210	661	v. O'Brien, 1 Rich., s. c., 268	785
v. Brown, 66 Me. 316	677	v. Olmsted, 50 Cal. 162	
v. Brown, 108 Mass. 386	98		954, 956
v. Brown, 23 Barb. 565	496	v. Orland, 36 Me. 376	647
v. Burns, 67 Me. 535	930	v. Overbury, 11 Ex. 715	729
v. Byers, 16 M. & W. 252	138	v. Patton, 3 Humph. 135	87
v. Castles, 11 Cush. 348	245	v. Perkins, 1 Hare, 564	999
v. Crump, 1 Marsh. 567	515	v. Pinkham, 18 Pick. 172	696
v. Delano, 12 Mass. 370	370	v. R. R., 11 Cush. 97	438
v. De Winton, 6 C. B. 336	795	v. R. R., 44 N. Y. 79	5
v. Dillahunty, 4 Sm. & M. 714	305	v. Reed, 79 Penn. St. 370	700
v. Donnell, 49 Me. 421	141	v. Rice, 26 Grat. 467	264
v. Duncan, 10 B. & C. 93	364	v. Rice, 29 Mo. 322	4
v. Dysinger, 1 Rawle, 408		v. Riggin, 94 Ill. 560	109
	268, 982, 985	v. Sayles, 27 Vt. 227	905, 906
v. Edgington, 2 M. & G. 279	218, 221, 904, 905	v. Schock, 27 Penn. St. 471	239, 377
v. Everhard, 52 Wis. 205			239, 377
	505, 521, 533	v. Scott, 51 Penn. St. 357	954
v. Finney, 53 Penn. St. 373	5	v. Slee, 103 U. S. 828	558, 604
v. Foree, 7 B. Mon. 357	377	v. Sloan, 6 Watts, 421	533
v. Foster, 113 Mass. 136	593	v. Smith, 7 B. Mon. 361	377
v. Foster, 51 Penn. St. 165	606	v. Spofford, 95 U. S. 474	707
v. Gilman, 13 Mass. 158		v. Stackpole, 9 N. H. 478	1002
	204, 210	v. Symons, 8 C. B. N. S. 208	718
v. Gilmore, 8 Greenl. 107		v. Thurston, 56 Me. 126	910
	977, 983	v. Tibbits, 11 C. B. N. S. 855	1029
v. Hare, 4 H. & N. 822	877	v. Winnisimmet Co., 11 Allen, 326	135, 137
v. Harris, 2 Gray, 359	742	v. Yaryan, 74 Ind. 305	719
v. Hatton, 9 Ired. 319	631	Browne v. Lee, 6 B. & C. 689	765, 835
v. Hodgson, 4 Taunt. 189		Browning v. Morris, 2 Cowp. 790	
	757, 759, 761		353, 357, 469
v. Holbrook, 4 Gray, 102	730	v. Wright, 2 B. & P. 13	
v. Holyoke, 53 Me. 9	208		553, 632, 664, 667
v. Huger, 21 How. 305	668	Brownlie v. Campbell, L. R. 5 Ap. Ca. 925	241
v. Hummel, 6 Barr, 86	1063	Brua's App., 55 Penn. St. 294	453
v. Ins. Co., 1 E. & E. 853		Bruce v. Bishop, 43 Vt. 161	3, 4, 22
	305, 311, 623	v. Bonney, 12 Gray, 107	206
v. Jodrell, 3 C. & P. 30	99	v. Bruce, 4 Dana, 530	999
v. Johnson, 10 M. & W. 331	897	v. Burr, 67 N. Y. 237	242
v. Kimball, 12 Vt. 617	311, 901		
v. Kinsey, 81 N. C. 245	373		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Bruce v. Hunter, 3 Camp, 467	709	Budd v. Atkinson, 30 N. J. Eq.	
v. Jones, 1 H. & C. 769	455	530	376
v. Pearson, 3 Johns. 534	4, 748	v. Fairmaner, 8 Bing. 48	220
v. Ruler, 2 Man. & R. 3	249	Buddicum v. Kirke, 3 Cranch, 293	1001
v. Warwick, 6 Taunt. 118	31, 32	Bufe v. Turner, 6 Taunt. 338	256
		Buffalo R. R. v. Falconer, 103 U.	
Bruck v. Tucker, 42 Cal. 346	186	S. 821	143
Bruen v. Marquand, 17 Johns. 58	821, 950	Buffalow v. Buffalow, 2 Dev. & B.	
		Eq. 241	103, 159, 161, 165
Bruff v. Mali, 36 N. Y. 200	237, 276	Buffett v. R. R., 40 N. Y. 168	140
Brugger v. Ins. Co., 5 Saw. 304	206	Buffington v. Gerrish, 15 Mass.	
Brumby v. Smith, 3 Ala. 123	311, 322, 326	156	258
		v. Quantin, 17 Penn.	
Bruner v. Wheaton, 46 Mo. 363	4	St. 310	285
Brunswick v. Vallean, 50 Iowa,		Buffum v. Buffum, 11 N. H. 451	977
120	343, 454	v. Green, 5 N. H. 71	107 a
Brush v. Keeler, 5 Wend. 250	450	Buford v. Caldwell, 3 Mo. 477	214
Bryan v. Bancks, 4 B. & Ald. 401	28	v. Kersey, 48 Miss. 642	936
v. Bradley, 16 Conn. 474	654	v. McKee, 1 Dana, 107	494
v. Brazil, 52 Iowa, 350	498, 997	Bulkeley v. Dayton, 14 Johns. 387	947
v. Hitchcock, 43 Mo. 527	260	Bulkley v. Fishing Co., 2 Conn.	
v. Osborne, 61 Ga. 51	242	252	137
v. Reynolds, 5 Wis. 200	402	v. Landon, 2 Conn. 404	513
Bryant v. Biddeford, 39 Me. 193	382	v. Morgan, 46 Conn. 393	
v. Boothe, 30 Ala. 311	249		286, 289
v. Booze, 55 Ga. 438	18, 382	v. Stewart, 1 Day, 130	740
v. Crosby, 40 Me. 9	219	Bull v. Price, 7 Bing. 237	713
v. Flight, 5 M. & W. 114	588	v. Robison, 10 Exch. 342	189, 911
v. Goodnow, 5 Pick. 228	528, 536	Bullard v. Creditors, 56 Cal. 600	239
		Bullen v. Denning, 5 B. & C. 842	670
v. Isburgh, 13 Gray, 607	189, 610	Bullock v. Dommit, 6 T. R. 650	
			311, 318
v. Richardson, L. R. 3 Ex.		v. Stoherge, 16 West. Jur.	
93 n (3); 14 L. T. N. S.	69	354	877
24		Bumpus v. Fisher, 21 Tex. 561	654
Bryce v. Ins. Co., 55 N. Y. 240	205, 207, 208	Bunch v. Hurst, 3 Des. 273	159
		Buncombe Co. v. McCarson, 1 Dev.	
Bryson v. Lucas, 84 N. C. 680	810 a	& B. 306	128
v. Whitehead, 1 Sim. &		Bundy v. Hyde, 50 N. H. 116	719
St. 74	431, 436	Bunge v. Koop, 48 N. Y. 225	504, 997
Buchanan v. Bank, 78 Ill. 500	505	Bunker v. Tufts, 55 Me. 180	815
v. Litchfield, 102 U. S.		Bunn v. Ahl, 29 Penn. St. 387	
278	453		376, 396
v. Marshall, 22 Vt. 561	573	v. Gorgas, 41 Penn. St. 441	1067
v. Turner, 26 Md. 1	77	v. Guy, 4 East, 190	433, 505
Buck v. Albee, 26 Vt. 184	340, 725	v. Riker, 4 Johns. 426	449, 450
v. Bank, 27 Mich. 293	483	Bunney v. Poyntz, 4 B. & Ad. 568	959
Buckingham v. Canal Co., 46 L.		Bunting v. R. R., 81 Penn. St.	
T. N. S. 885	718	254	797
Buckland v. Express Co., 97 Mass.		Burbridge v. Manners, 3 Camp.	
124	438	193	884
Buckle v. Knoop, L. R. 2 Ex. 125	637	Burch v. Breckenridge, 16 B. Mon.	
Buckley's App., 48 Penn. St. 491	540	482	77
Buckley v. Bank, 35 N. J. L. 400	795	Burchell v. Clark, L. R. 2 C. P.	
v. Briggs, 30 Mo. 452	128	D. 88	207
v. Wells, 33 N. Y. 518	85	Burchfield v. Moore, 3 K. & B. 683;	
Buckman v. Levi, 3 Camp. 414	877, 879	23 L. J. Q. B. 261	696, 700, 702, 744
		Burdett v. Spilsbury, 6 M. & G.	
Buckmaster v. Thompson, 36 N.		386; 10 Cl. & F. 340	681
Y. 558	3	Burdick v. Green, 15 Johns. 247	954

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Burgen v. Straughen, 7 J. J. Marsh. 583	486	Burrill v. Nahant Bank, 2 Metc. 163	128
Burgess v. Abbott, 6 Hill, 135	833	Burritt v. Ins. Co., 5 Hill, 188	256
v. Eve, L. R. 13 Eq. 450	515, 710	Burroughs v. R. R., 100 Mass. 26	140
v. Pollock, 53 Iowa, 273	110	v. Richman, 13 N. J. L. 233	118, 119
v. Salmon, 97 U. S. 381	885	Burrowes v. Lock, 10 Ves. 470	216, 241
Burghart v. Angerstein, 6 C. & P. 690	69	Burt v. Dewey, 40 N. Y. 283	230
v. Hall, 4 M. & W. 727	64, 70	v. McBain, 29 Mich. 260	83
Burk v. Webb, 32 Mich. 173	502	v. Place, 6 Cow. 431	340
Burke v. Allen, 29 N. H. 106	98, 123	v. Rattle, 31 Oh. St. 116	138
v. Anderson, 40 Ga. 535	205, 211, 291	Burtis v. R. R., 24 N. Y. 269	140
v. Noble, 48 Penn. St. 168	831	v. Thompson, 42 N. Y. 246	603
v. R. R., L. R. 5 C. P. D. 1	22	Burton v. Pinkerton, L. R. 2 Ex. 340	712
Burkhalter v. Bank, 42 N. Y. 538	620, 956	v. R. R., 9 Ex. 507	14
Burkham v. Daniel, 56 Ala. 604	181	v. Shotwell, 13 Bush. 271	10, 13
Burkholder v. Beetem, 65 Penn. St. 496	242, 365	v. Stewart, 3 Wend. 236	285, 919
v. Plank, 69 Penn. St. 225	495	v. Sturgeon, L. R. 2 Ch. D. 318	80
Burlew v. Hillman, 16 N. J. Eq. 23	799	v. Wells, 30 Miss. 688	809
Burley v. Russell, 10 N. H. 184	52, 74	Buschman v. Codd, 52 Md. 202	232 a, 259
Burmester v. Hogarth, 11 M. & W. 97	776	Bush v. Lathrop, 22 N. Y. 535	844
Burn v. Boulton, 2 C. B. 476	924, 930	Bushell v. Beavan, 1 Bing. N. C. 103	788
v. Carvalho, 4 M. & Cr. 690	845	Bushnell v. Church, 15 Conn. 406	570
Burnap v. Partridge, 3 Vt. 144	731	Busk v. Spence, 4 Camp. 329	568
Burnard v. Haggis, 14 C. B. N. S. 45	53	v. Walsh, 4 Taunt. 290	354
Burnby v. Bollett, 16 M. & W. 644	222, 904, 912	Bussey v. Gant, 10 Humph. 238	929
Burnell v. Minot, 4 Moore, 340	354	Bussman v. Ganster, 72 Penn. St. 285	318
Burnett v. Biscoe, 4 Johns. 235	684	Butcher v. Buchanan, 17 Iowa, 81	253
v. Hawpe, 25 Grat. 481	77	Bute v. Thompson, 13 M. & W. 487	298, 328
v. Jersey City, 31 N. J. Eq. 341	784	Butler's App., 26 Penn. St. 63	252
Burnham v. R. R., 63 Me. 298	269, 270	Butler v. Burleson, 16 Vt. 176	433
Burns v. McCabe, 72 Penn. St. 309	285	v. Butler, 77 N. Y. 472	899, 901
v. Pillsbury, 17 N. H. 66	576	v. Butler, 21 Kan. 521	399
Burnside v. Merrick, 4 Met. 537	820	v. Cumpston, L. R. 7 Eq. 16	77
v. Wayman, 49 Mo. 356	204	v. Edgerton, 15 Ind. 15	463
Burr v. Beers, 24 N. Y. 178	786 a	v. Frank, 128 Mass. 29	784
v. Burr, 10 Paige, 166	80	v. Haskell, 4 Desaus. 651	165, 516, 518
v. Burr, 26 Penn. St. 284	930	v. Horwitz, 7 Wall. 258	984
v. McDonald, 3 Grat. 215	138	v. Lee, 11 Ala. 885	382
v. Veeder, 3 Wend. 412	197, 752	v. Maples, 9 Wall. 766	945
v. Wilcox, 13 Allen, 269	523, 532	v. Mill Co., Sup. Ct. Minn. 1881; 12 Rep. 365	588
Burrell, ex parte, L. R. 1 Ch. D. 552	257	v. Mountgarrett, 7 H. L. C. 633	893
Burrill v. Ins. Co., 1 Edm. Sel. Ca. 233	338 a	v. Myer, 17 Ind. 77	463
		v. Northumberland, 50 N. H. 33	353
		v. Pennsylvania, 10 How. 402	1071

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Butler v. Slam, 50 Penn. St. 456	719	Caffrey v. Darby, 6 Ves. 488	309
v. Watkins, 13 Wall. 456	131	Cage v. Acton, 1 Ld. Ray. 515	609
Butt, <i>ex parte</i> , 46 L. J. B. 14; 13		Cahill v. Martin, 7 L. R. Ir. 361	91
Cox C. C. 374	483	Cahokia v. Rautenberg, 88 Ill.	
Butterfeild v. Burroughs, 1 Salk.		219	810 a
211	227	Cain v. Hunt, 41 Ind. 466	208
Butterfield v. Cooper, 6 Cow. 481	673	Caine v. Coulton, 1 H. & C. 764	
v. Hartshorn, 7 N. H.		953, 980, 985	
345	784, 854, 858	v. Horsfall, 1 Exch. 519	638
Button v. Thompson, L. R. 4 C. P.		Caines v. Smith, 15 M. & W. 189	
330	717	606, 882	
Buttrick v. Holden, 8 Cush. 233		Cake v. Bank, 86 Penn. St. 303	
325, 895		955, 957	
Buzzell v. Bennett, 2 Cal. 101	37	Caldecott, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 4 Ch. D.	
Bwlch-y-Plwm Lead Co. v. Baynes,		150	340, 415, 483
L. R. 2 Exch. 324	284, 285, 287	Calder v. Rutherford, 3 B. & B.	
Byars v. Spencer, 101 Ill. 429	678	302	832
Byers v. Chapin, 28 Oh. St. 300		Caldwell's case, 14 Grat. 698	321
221, 905		Caldwell v. Bridal, 48 Iowa, 15	360
v. Daugherty, 40 Ind. 198	264	v. Harding, 1 Lowell,	
v. Surget, 19 How. 303	166, 518	326	357
Byram v. Hunter, 36 Me. 217	513	v. Heitshu, 9 W. & S. 51	654
Byrd v. Boyd, 4 McCord, 246	717, 718	v. Wentworth, 14 N. H.	
v. Halls, 2 Keyes, 646	258	431	930, 931, 933
v. Hughes, 84 Ill. 174	376	v. Williams, 1 Bailey	
v. Odem, 9 Ala. 755	427	Eq. 175	495
Byrne v. Fitzhugh, 1 C. M. & R.		Caley v. R. R., 80 Penn. St. 363	
613 n	815	206, 528	
v. Jansen, 50 Cal. 624	221	Calhoun v. Emigrant Co., 93 U. S.	
v. Love, 14 Tex. 81	400	124	678
v. Van Tienhoven, L. R. 5		Calkins v. Chandler, 36 Mich. 320	532
C. P. D. 344	11, 18	v. State, 13 Wis. 389	264
yrnside v. Burdett, 15 W. Va.		Call v. Calef, 13 Metc. 362	
702	230	422, 425, 427	
Byrom v. Thompson, 11 A. & E. 31	705	Callaghan v. Callaghan, 8 Cl. &	
Bywater v. Richardson, 3 N. & M.		F. 374	166
748; 1 Ad. & El. 508	572	v. Hallett, 1 Caines,	
		104	405, 413, 500, 502
		Callahan v. Boazman, 21 Ala. 246	934
		v. Donnolly, 45 Cal. 152	430
		Calland v. Lloyd, 6 M. & W. 26	733
		Callander v. Howard, 10 C. B. 290	
		780, 964	
		Callen v. Hilty, 14 Penn. St. 286	664
		Callis v. Waddy, 2 Munf. 511	289
		Callisher v. Bischoffsheim, L. R.	
		5 Q. B. 449	532, 533, 535
		Callmeyer v. Mayor, 83 N. Y. 116	902
		Calloway v. Hamby, 65 N. C. 631	318
		Calton v. Bragg, 15 East, 223	709
		Calverley v. Williams, 1 Ves. Jr.	
		210	186, 187, 190
		Calvert v. Baker, 4 M. & W. 417	700
		v. Bradley, 18 How. U. S.	
		580	817
		Calvo v. Davies, 73 N. Y. 211	
		786 a, 853	
		Cambridge Savings Bk. v. Hyde,	
		131 Mass. 77	687, 700
		Came v. Brigham, 39 Me. 35	138

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Cameron v. Dürkheim, 55 N. Y.		Cann v. Cann, 1 P. Wms. 723	198
425	453	Cannan v. Bryce, 3 B. & Ald. 179	
v. Peck, 37 Conn. 555		341, 343, 344, 345, 354, 453	
340, 353, 382		Cannock v. Jones, 3 Ex. 233	663
v. Wells, 30 Vt. 633	882	Cannon v. Alsbury, 1 A. K. Mar.	
Camidge v. Allenby, 6 B. & C. 373		76	73
853, 958, 960		v. Cannon, 26 N. J. Eq.	
Camp v. Gullett, 2 Eng. (Ark.)		316	677
524	956	Cany v. Patton, 2 Ash. 140	88
v. Pulver, 5 Barb. 91	246	Cape Ann Nat. Bk. v. Burns, 129	
v. Tel. Co., 1 Meto. (Ky.)		Mass. 596	695
164	438	Capehart v. R. R., 81 N. C. 438	438
Campanari v. Woodburn, 15 C. B.		Capen v. Alden, 5 Met. 268	929
400	12, 323, 714	Caples v. Steel, 7 Oregon, 491	250, 252
Campbell, ex parte, L. R. 16 Eq.		Capper v. Dando, 2 A. & E. 458	577
417; 9 Ch. 12	298, 742	Capron v. Porter, 43 Conn. 383	298
Campbell's case, L. R. 4 Ch. D.		Carberry v. Tannehill, 1 H. & J.	
470	135	224	159
Campbell v. Campbell's Trustee,		Card v. Hope, 2 B. & C. 661	407
Ct. of App. Ky. 1881	91	Cardigan v. Armitage, 2 B. & C.	
v. Christie, 2 Stark. 64	701	197	670
v. Fleming, 1 A. & E.		v. Page, 6 N. H. 183	407
40	284, 288	Cardwell v. Martin, 9 East, 190	700
v. Gates, 10 Barr, 483	716	Carew v. Otis, 1 Johns. 418	755
v. Gittings, 19 Ohio, 347	581	Carey v. Adkins, 4 Camp. 92	728
v. Graham, 1 R. & M.		v. Giles, 10 Ga. 9	133
453	1022	v. Prentice, 1 Root, 91	737
v. Hassel, 1 Stark. 185	945	Cargill v. Bower, L. R. 10 Ch. D.	
v. Hooper, 3 Sm. & G.		502	277
153	107	Cargo ex "Argos," L. R. 5 P. C.	
v. Ins. Co., 98 Mass. 381	256	134	306, 360
v. Ketcham, 1 Bibb, 406	119	Carhart's App., 78 Penn. St. 100	494
v. Kuhn, 45 Mich. 513	107 a	Carington v. Wycombe, L. R. 3	
v. Mesier, 4 Johns. Ch.		Ch. 377	135
334	765, 835	Cariss v. Tattersall, 2 M. & G. 890	698
v. Murray, 62 Ga. 86	247	Carleton v. Witcher, 5 N. H. 196	
v. Parker, 9 Bosw. 322	576		407, 509
v. Patterson, 58 Ind. 66	785	v. Woods, 28 N. H. 290	
v. Phelps, 1 Pick. 65	771	338, 339, 511	
v. R. R., 5 Hare, 519	887	Carley v. Vance, 17 Mass. 389	981
v. Rothwell, 47 L. J. C.		Carlos v. Fancourt, 5 T. R. 482	599
P. 144	829	Carlyon v. Trescott, L. R. 20 Eq.	
v. Sloan, 62 Penn. St.		348	948
481	467	Carman v. Elledge, 40 Iowa, 409	570
v. Smith, 8 Hun, 6; 71		v. Ins. Co., 6 W. & S.	
N. Y. 26	785, 786 a, 853	155	1029
v. Spencer, 2 Binn. 129	119	v. Noble, 9 Barr, 366	512, 515
v. Stakes, 2 Wend. 137	53	Carmarthen R. R. v. Manchester	
Canada v. Canada, 6 Cush. 15	716	R. R., L. R. 8 C. P. 685	953
Canal Bank v. Bank of Albany, 1		Carmichael v. Newell, 2 Phil. 289	15
Hill (N. Y.), 287	744	v. Vandebur, 50 Iowa,	
Canal Bridge v. Gordon, 1 Pick.		651	245
297	128	Carnahan v. Allderdice, 4 Har-	
Canal Co. v. Knapp, 9 Pet. 541	128	ring. 99	39
v. Ray, 101 U. S. 522	661	Carnegie v. Morrison, 2 Met. 381	
Canby v. Griffin, 3 Harring. 333	321	723, 728	
Candor's App., 5 W. & S. 513	719	Carnes v. Nisbett, 7 H. & N. 778	432
27 Penn. St. 119	495	v. Red River Parish, 29	
Canedy v. Marcy, 13 Gray, 373		La. An. 608	1067
185, 199, 206, 207, 208		Carpenter v. Bank, 123 Mass. 66	795

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Carpenter v. Butterfield, 3 Johns. Ca. 145	1019	Carter v. Zenblin, 68 Ind. 436	785, 786
v. Carpenter, 10 C. E. Green, 194	89	Carthrae v. Brown, 3 Leigh, 98	820, 826
v. Carpenter, 8 Bush, 283	109	Cartright v. Greene, 47 Barb. 9	463
v. Dodge, 20 Vt. 595	531	Cartwright v. Cartwright, 3 D. M. & G. 982	395
v. Groff, 5 S. & R. 162	495	v. Cooke, 3 B. & Ad. 701	996
v. Holcomb, 105 Mass. 280	995	Carver v. Adams, 38 Vt. 500	1009
v. Jones, 44 Md. 625	198	Cary v. Bancroft, 14 Pick. 315	979, 984
v. Mitchell, 50 Ill. 470	77	v. Hotailing, 1 Hill, 311	239, 377
v. Stevens, 12 Wend. 589	311	v. White, 52 N. Y. 138	532
v. Tatro, 36 Wis. 297	91	Case v. Banking Ass., 4 Comst. 166	539
v. U. S., 17 Wal. 489	708	v. Barber, T. Raym. 450	1003
Carprow v. Canavan, 4 How. (Miss.) 370	1019	v. Boughton, 11 Wend. 106	237, 495
Carr v. Bank, 107 Mass. 45	836	v. Case, 26 Mich. 484	518
v. Bartlett, 72 Me. 120	528, 808	v. Green, 5 Watts, 262	869, 971, 990
v. Clough, 26 N. H. 280	48	v. Hall, 24 Wend. 102	231
v. Duval, 14 Pet. 77	4	v. Howard, 41 Iowa, 479	570
v. Holliday, 1 Dev. & B. Eq. 344; 5 Ired. Eq. 167	101, 106	Casey v. Casey, 14 Ill. 112	161
v. Le Fevre, 27 Penn. St. 413	797	Cash v. Kennion, 11 Ves. 314	463
v. Petroleum Co., L. R. 1 C. P. 636	705	Cashman v. Ins. Co., 5 Allen (N. B.), 246	338 a
v. Welch, 46 Ill. 88	695	Caskie v. Webster, 2 Wal. Jr. 131	843
Carraway v. Odeneal, 56 Miss. 223	504, 935	Cassard v. Hinman, 14 How. Pr. 84	453
Carrier v. Brannan, 3 Cal. 328	452	Cassiday v. McKenzie, 4 W. & S. 282	323
v. Dilworth, 59 Penn. St. 406	499, 523, 870	Castle v. Playford, L. R. 7 Ex. 98	311, 583
Carrigan v. Ins. Co., 53 Vt. 418	338, 350	Caston v. Brock, 14 S. C. 104	651
Carriger v. Whittington, 26 Mo. 311	323	Catawissa R. R. v. Titus, 49 Penn. St. 277	815
Carris v. Carris, 24 N. J. Eq. 516	265	Cathcart v. Robinson, 5 Pet. 264	166
Carrol v. Blencow, 4 Esp. 27	76	Catlett v. Trustees, 62 Ind. 365	388
Carroll v. Ins. Co., 8 Mass. 515	340	Catlin v. Henton, 9 Wis. 476	483
v. Nixon, 4 W. & S. 517	515	v. Tobias, 26 N. Y. 217	580
v. R. R., 111 Mass. 1	6	Catling v. King, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 660; 46 L. J. C. 384	804
v. Ridgaway, 8 Md. 328	778	Caton v. Shaw, 2 Har. & G. 13	570
Carson v. Ely, 23 Mo. 265	512	Catt v. Tourle, L. R. 4 Ch. 654	432, 433, 437
v. Murray, 3 Paige, 483	395	Catterall v. Hindle, L. R. 1 C. P. 186	945
v. Phelps, 40 Md. 73	677	Cattle v. Stockton Water Works, L. R. 10 Q. B. 453	228, 812
Carstairs v. Taylor, L. R. 6 Exch. 217	308	Catton v. Simpson, 8 A. & E. 136	696
Carter v. Alexander, 71 Mo. 585	230	Caudell v. Shaw, 4 T. R. 361	76
v. Beck, 40 Ala. 599	684	Caul v. Gibson, 3 Barr, 416	528
v. Black, 46 Mo. 384	219	Caulkins v. Fry, 35 Conn. 170	104, 108, 118, 123
v. Boehm, 3 Burr. 1905; 1 W. Bl. 593	250, 256	v. Harris, 9 Johns. 324	899
v. Canterbury, 3 Conn. 461	740	v. Hellman, 47 N. Y. 449	877
v. Carter, 14 Sm. & M. 59	90, 395	Cavaness v. Ross, 33 Ark. 572	935
v. Glass, 44 Mich. 154	279	Cave v. Mills, 7 H. & N. 913	234
v. Machine Co., 51 Md. 290	131	Cavender v. Waddingham, 5 Mo. Ap. 457	118
v. Ring, 3 Camp. 459	577		
v. Talcott, 10 Vt. 471	944		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Cavendish v. Geaves, 24 Beav. 163		Chambers v. Donaldson, 9 East,	
	842, 1025	471	814
Cavode v. M'Kelvey, Add. 56	533	v. Jaynes, 4 Barr, 39	
Cawley v. People, 95 Ill. 249	570 a		598, 898
Caxwell v. De Vaughn, 55 Ga.		v. Manchester R. R., 5	
643	929	B. & S. 588	137
Caze v. Ins. Co., 7 Cranch, 358	715	v. Rubey, 47 Mo. 99	513
Cazeaux v. Mali, 25 Barb. 578	237	Chambliss v. Matthews, 57 Miss.	
Cazenove v. Ins. Co., 6 C. B. N. S.		306	1025
437	256	Chamley v. Dunsany, 2 Sch. & L.	
Cecil v. Beaver, 28 Iowa, 241	677	690	936
v. Deyerle, 28 Grat. 775	1062	Champenois v. Fort, 45 Miss. 355	923
v. Spurger, 32 Mo. 462	249	Champion v. Hartshorne, 9 Conn.	
Cedar Rapids Bank v. Hendrie, 49		564	717
Iowa, 402	414	v. Joslyn, 44 N. Y. 653	
Center v. Billinghamurst, 1 Cow. 33	682		774, 776
Central Bk. v. Copeland, 18 Md.		v. Short, 1 Campb. 53	
305	242		4, 712, 898
v. Pratt, 115 Mass.		Champlin v. Champlin, 1 Hoff. Ch.	
539	129	55	90, 395
Central Bridge Corporation v.		v. Laytin, 18 Wend.	
Lowell, 15 Gray, 106	1064	407	198, 199
Central Ohio Salt Co. v. Guthrie,		v. Rowley, 18 Wend.	
35 Ohio St. 666	442	187	607, 712, 899, 901
Central R. R. v. Anderson, 58 Ga.		Champney v. Blanchard, 39 N. Y.	
393	910	111	496
v. Collins, 40 Ga.		Chancellor v. Wiggins, 4 B. Mon.	
582	135, 442 a	201	230, 231
v. Kisch, L. R. 2 H.		Chancely v. Bailey, 37 Ga. 532	474
L. 99	245, 276, 284	Chandelor v. Lopus, Cro. Jac. 4 ;	
Central Savings Bank v. Richards,		1 Smith's L. C., 7th Am. ed.	
109 Mass. 413	25 a	299	187, 212, 214, 216, 219, 221, 222,
Chadsey v. Greene, 24 Conn. 562	263		223, 224, 227, 228, 230, 232, 237, 240,
Chadwick v. Knox, 11 Foster, N.			243, 245, 247, 249, 253, 257, 258, 263,
H. 226	404		282
Chaffee v. Ins. Co., 18 N. Y. 376	256	Chandler, in re, 13 Am. L. Reg.	
v. Jones, 19 Pick. 260	765, 835	310	453
v. Thomas, 7 Cow. 358	513	v. Brainard, 14 Pick.	
Chalmers, ex parte, L. R. 8 Ch.		285	758
289	293, 580	v. Drew, 6 N. H. 469	1025
Chamberlain v. Ins. Co., 55 N. H.		v. Glover, 32 Penn. St.	
249	837	509	62
v. Robertson, 31		v. Johnson, 39 Ga. 85	
Iowa, 408	2, 89		339, 483, 509
v. Smith, 44 Penn.		v. McKinney, 6 Mich.	
St. 431	590	217	36
v. Williamson, 2 M.		v. Sanger, 114 Mass.	
& S. 408	324	364	149
Chamberlin v. Perkins, 55 N. H.		v. Simmons, 97 Mass.	
237	956	508	47, 48, 63, 285
v. Whitford, 102 Mass.		v. Sprague, 5 Metc. 306	792
448	512	v. Van Roeder, 24	
Chambers v. Bank, 78 Penn. St.		How. 224	377
205	744	Chanter v. Hopkins, 4 M. & W.	
v. Calhoun, 18 Penn.		399	194, 221, 223, 227,
St. 13	528		560, 903, 904, 907
v. Clews, 21 Wal. 317	779	v. Leese, 4 M. & W. 295 ;	
v. Crabbe, 34 Beav.		5 M. & W. 698	
457	399		815, 822, 826
v. Davis, 3 Whart. 40	514	Chanudflower v. Prestley, Yelv. 30	667

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Chapin v. Clemitson, 1 Barb. 311	667	Charters v. Bayntun, 7 C. & P. 52	69
v. Lapham, 20 Pick. 467		Chase v. Bradley, 26 Me. 531	662, 673
	532, 710	v. Burkholder, 18 Penn.	
v. Longworth, 31 Oh. St.		St. 48	338
421	180	v. Corcoran, 106 Mass. 286	507
v. Norton, 6 McLean, 500	558	v. Dwinal, 7 Greenl. 134	
v. Pease, 10 Conn. 69	377		149, 737, 738
Chapleq v. Benefit Soc., L. R. 5 C.		v. Flanders, 2 N. H. 417	991
P. D. 331	275	v. Vaughan, 30 Me. 412	949
Chapman v. Black, 2 B. & Ald.		Chastain v. Bowman, 1 Hill, S.	
588	351	C. 270	364
v. Brooklyn, 40 N. Y.		Chater v. Beckett, 7 T. R. 201	
372	520		509, 511
v. Chapman, 13 Ind.		Chavasse, ex parte, 4 D. J. S. 655	480
396	38	Cheale v. Kenward, 3 De G. & J.	
v. Cole, 12 Gray, 141	187	27	517, 523
v. Cottrell, 3 H. & C.		Cheeney v. R. R., 68 Ill. 570	720
865	20, 872	Cheetham v. Crook, 1 McC. & Y.	
v. Cowles, 41 Ala. 103	943	307	1021
v. Gwyther, L. R. 1 Q		v. Ward, 1 Bos. & P.	
B. 463	610	630	831
v. Hicks, 2 C. & M. 633	976	Cheever v. Wilson, 9 Wall. 108	77
v. Hurd, 67 Ill. 234	208	Cheminant v. Thornton, 2 C. & P.	
v. Murch, 19 John. 290	219	50	977
v. R. R., 6 Ohio St. 119	140	Cheney v. Duke, 10 Gill & J. 11	343
v. Robertson, 6 Paige,		v. Eberhardt, 8 Neb. 423	470
627	462, 463	Cheraw, etc. R. R. v. White, 14	
v. Rose, 56 N. Y. 137		S. C. 51	607
	185, 249, 264	Cherbonnier v. Evitts, 56 Md. 276	159
v. Shaw, 5 Greenl. 59	724	Cherry v. Bank, L. R. 3 P. C. 24	
v. Speller, 14 Q. B. 621			277, 1046
	230, 520, 746	v. Thompson, L. R. 7 Q.	
Chappel v. Brockway, 21 Wend.		B. 573	882
157	433	Cheshire v. Barrett, 4 McCord,	
Chapple v. Cooper, 13 M. & W.		241	36, 37, 56, 58, 66
252	68	Chesley v. Frost, 1 N. H. 145	698
v. Durston, 1 C. & J. 1	1018	Chess v. Chess, 1 Pen. & W. 32	283
Charles v. Blackwell, L. R. 2 C.		Chester v. Bank of Kingston, 16	
P. D. 151	953	N. Y. 336	870
v. Branker, 12 M. & W.		Chester Co. v. Barber, 97 Penn.	
743	975	St. 455	421, 427
v. Scott, 1 S. & R. 294		Chester Emery Co. v. Lucas, 112	
	684, 1040	Mass. 424	202
Charles River Bridge v. Warren		Chester Glass Co. v. Dewey, 16	
Bridge, 7 Pick. 344; 11 Pet.		Mass. 94	140, 142
420	1063, 1064	Chesterfield v. Janssen, 1 Atk.	
Charleston, etc. R. R. v. Blake, 12		301; 2 Ves. Sr. 125	232, 301
Rich. S. C. 634	274	Chesterfield Colliery v. Hawkins,	
Charlesworth v. Holt, L. R. 9 Ex.		3 H. & C. 677	784, 788, 810
38	90, 395	Chestnut v. Harbaugh, 78 Penn.	
Charlotte, etc. R. R. v. Gow, 59		St. 473	383
Ga. 685	570 a	Chestnut Hill Turnpike Co. v.	
Charlton v. Durham, L. R. 4 Ch.		Rutter, 4 S. & R. 6	128
433	947	Cheveley v. Fuller, 13 C. B. 122	4
v. R. R., 5 Jur. N. S.		Chew v. Bank, 14 Md. 299	107
1096	442 a	v. Phillippi, 32 Penn. St.	
Charnley v. Dulles, 8 W. & S.		205	888
353	230	Chicago v. Greer, 9 Wall. 726	247
Charter v. Trevelyan, 11 Cl. & F.		v. Sheldon, 9 Wall. 50	5, 206
714	284, 289	v. Tilley, 103 U. S. 146	4, 716

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Chicago Building Assoc. v. Crowell, 65 Ill. 453	140	Church v. Feterow, 2 Pen. & W. 301	619, 620, 622, 623, 624, 891
Chicago Dock Co. v. Foster, 48 Ill. 507	291	v. Gas Light Co., 6 Ad. & El. 846	128, 130
Chicago Packing Co. v. Tilton, 87 Ill. 547	221, 904, 905	v. Gilman, 15 Wend. 656	107 a
Chicago, etc. R. R. v. Ackley, 94 U. S. 179	1064	v. Landers, 10 Wend. 79	84
v. Dane, 43 N. Y. 240	5, 9, 13, 453 a	Churchill v. Bank, 19 Pick. 532	896
v. Field, 86 Ill. 270	1015	v. Perkins, 5 Mass. 541	405
v. Hale, 2 Ill. App. 150	438	Churchman v. Smith, 6 Whart. 146	695
v. Iowa, 94 U. S. 155	1064	Churton v. Douglas, Johns. Ch. 174	435
v. Lee, 60 Ill. 501	269	Chute v. Pattee, 37 Me. 102	499
v. Riddle, 60 Ill. 534	271	Cincinnati v. Rice, 15 Ohio, 225	382
Chick v. Trevett, 20 Me. 462	505	Cincinnati Bk. v. Hemingray, 34 Oh. St. 381	1013
Child v. Dwight, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq. 171	944	Cincinnati, etc. R. R. v. Clarkson, 7 Ind. 595	128
v. Morley, 8 T. R. 610	756, 759	v. Lee, 37 Oh. St. 479	502
Childe v. Horden, 2 Bulstr. 143	567	Citizens' Bk. v. Bk. of New Orleans, L. R. 6 H. L. 352	259
Childers v. Wooler, 2 E. & E. 287	214	Citizens' Land Co. v. Uhler, 48 Md. 455	467
Childerston v. Hammon, 9 S. & R. 68	1021	City Bank, ex parte, L. R. 3 Ch. 758	138, 846
Childs v. Monins, 2 Br. & B. 460	810 a	City Bank v. Cutter, 3 Pick. 414	575, 980
Chiles v. Nelson, 8 Dana, 281	18	City Council v. Road Co., 31 Ala. 76	143
Chilton v. People, 66 Ill. 501	680	City Discount Co. v. McLean, L. R. 9 C. P. 692	933
Chinn v. Chinn, 22 La. An. 599	724, 725	City Ins. Co. v. Carrugi, 41 Ga. 660	256
Chinnoek v. Ely, 4 De G. J. & S. 638	4, 5	City Nat. Bk. v. Hamilton, 34 N. J. Eq. 158	239
Chipman v. Morrill, 20 Cal. 130	765	v. Phelps, 86 N. Y. 484	570
Chippendale v. Thurston, 4 C. & P. 98	621	Clack v. Holland, 19 Beav. 262	842
Chisman v. Count, 2 M. & G. 307	779	Clafin v. Bank, 25 N. Y. 293	161
Chisolm v. Gadsden, 1 Strobb. 220	248	v. Briant, 58 Ga. 414	570
Choen v. Guthrie, 15 W. Va. 100	1021	v. Hawes, 8 Mass. 261	981
Chorce v. Moseley, 1 Bailey, 136	619, 622, 623, 624, 891	v. Ostrom, 54 N. Y. 581	860
Chorley, ex parte, L. R. 11 Eq. 157	846	Clagett v. Hall, 9 Gill & J. 80	683
Chorpenning's Appeal, 32 Penn. St. 315	161	Claghorn v. Lingo, 62 Ala. 230	219
Christ v. Dittenbach, 1 S. & R. 464	264	Claire v. Claire, 10 Neb. 54	779
Christ Church Hosp. v. Phil. Co., 24 Penn. St. 229	738	Clancey v. Salt Co., 62 Barb. 395	442 a
Christian Church v. Johnson, 53 Ind. 273	128	Clancy v. Overman, 1 Dev. & B. 402	305, 311
Christian Union v. Yount, 101 U. S. 352	140	Clap, in re, 2 Low. 226	956
Christie v. Craige, 20 Penn. St. 430	853, 1003	Clapham v. Shillito, 7 Beav. 146	244
Christmas v. Spink, 15 Ohio, 600	732, 735	Clapp v. Rice, 13 Gray, 403; 15 Gray, 557	765, 816
		Clarance v. Marshall, 2 C. & M. 495	723, 732

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Clare v. Lamb, L. R. 10 C. P.	334	Clark v. Wardwell, 55 Me.	61 141
	181, 198, 751	v. Weis, 87 Ill.	438 558
Clarendon v. Weston, 16 Vt.	332 779	v. White, 12 Pet.	178 380
Claridge v. Klett, 15 Penn. St.		v. Woodruff, 83 N. Y.	518
255	893		652, 657
Clark v. Alexander, 8 Scott, N.		v. Young, 1 Cranch,	181 956
R. 147	965	Clarke v. Cobley, 2 Cox,	173 54
v. Badgley, 3 Halst.	233 470	v. Courtney, 5 Peters,	319 323
v. Baird, 9 N. Y.	183 259, 633	v. Dickson, 6 C. B. N. S.	
v. Baker, 5 Met.	452 233, 748	453	242 a, 286
v. Baker, 2 Whart.	340 271	v. Dickson, E. B. & E.	148
v. Bigelow, 16 Me.	246 573	282, 285, 286, 290, 730, 736	
v. Bulmer, 11 M. & W.	243 708	v. Dutcher, 9 Cow.	674
v. Bush, 3 Cow.	151 1033		198, 754
v. Cable, 21 Mo.	225 950	v. Fell, 4 B. & Ad.	404
v. Carpenter, 4 C. E. Gr.			1012, 1014
328	190	v. Foss, 7 Biss.	540 453
v. Clark, 6 W. & S.	85 80	v. Gilbert, 26 N. Y.	279 323
v. Cort, Cr. & Ph.	154 1025	v. Hawkins, 5 R. I.	219
v. Dales, 20 Barb.	42 18		842, 1003, 1026
v. Depew, 25 Penn. St.		v. Hutchins, 14 East,	475 879
509	165	v. Leslie, 5 Esp.	28 72
v. Dinsmore, 5 N. H.	136 998	v. Morey, 10 Johns.	69 94
v. Douglass, 62 Penn. St.		v. School Dist., 3 R. I.	
408	377	199	138
v. Dutcher, 9 Cow.	674 198	v. Shee, 1 Cowp.	197 341
v. Everhart, 63 Penn. St.		v. Thompson, 2 R. I.	146 837
347	242, 245, 259, 282	v. Watson, 18 C. B. N. S.	
v. Field, 18 Vt.	460 265	278	594
v. Foxcroft, 6 Greenl.	296 405	v. Westrope, 18 C. B.	765
v. Franklin, 7 Leigh,	1 311		593, 594
v. Gamwell, 125 Mass.	428 533	v. White, 12 Pet.	178 243
v. Gaylord, 24 Conn.	484 712	v. Wright, 6 H. & N.	849 537
v. Gilbert, 26 N. Y.	279	Clarkson v. Creely, 35 Mo.	95 499
	311, 323, 748	v. Edge, 33 Beav.	227 433
v. Goddard, 39 Ala.	164 31	Clay v. Ray, 17 C. B. N. S.	188 235
v. Houghton, 12 Gray,	38 893	v. Yates, 1 H. & N.	73 714
v. Ins. Co., 1 Story,	109	Claydon v. Green, L. R. 3 C. P.	
	345, 475	511	887
v. Ins. Co., 8 How.	235 256	Clayton's case, 5 Co. 1	894
v. Lazarus, 2 M. & G.	167 748	1 Mer.	572
v. Marsiglia, 1 Denio,	317 708		923, 928, 929, 933
v. Parish, 1 Bibb,	547; 3	Clayton v. Adams, 6 T. R.	604 81
Bibb, 261	820	v. Freet, 10 Ohio St.	544 199
v. Peat Co., 35 Conn.	303 843	v. Gregson, 5 Ad. & El.	
v. Pinney, 6 Cow.	297 740	302	637
v. Pinney, 7 Cow.	681 632, 913	v. Kynaston, 2 Salk.	573 831
v. Ralls, 50 Iowa,	275 215, 219	Clearwater v. Kimler, 43 Ill.	272
v. Remington, 11 Met.	361		103, 110
	570, 570 a	v. Meredith, 1 Wall.	
v. Rosenkrans, 31 N. J.		25	312
Eq. 665	91	Cleaveland v. Smith, 2 Story,	
v. Russel, 3 Watts,	213	278	633, 668
	582, 1033	Cleaver v. Scheetz, 70 Penn. St.	
v. Sigourney, 17 Conn.		496	76
511	505	Clem v. R. R., 9 Ind.	488 259, 264
v. Smith, 88 Ill.	298 945	Clemens v. Clemens, 28 Wis.	637 377
v. Swift, 3 Met.	390 837	Clement v. Boone, 5 Ill. Ap.	109 232 a
v. Terry, 25 Conn.	395 711	v. Brush, 3 Johns. Cas.	
v. Titcomb, 42 Barb.	122 138	180	684, 860

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Clement v. Clement, 8 N. H. 210		Clowes v. Clowes, 3 Curteis, 185	265
545, 551, 559, 585		v. Higginson, 1 Ves. & B.	
v. Mattison, 3 Rich. 93	113	524	190
Clements v. Moore, 6 Wall. 299	377	Clubb v. Hutson, 18 C. B. N. S.	
v. Yturria, 81 N. Y. 285		414	483
352, 473		Clugas v. Penaluna, 4 T. R. 466	
Clementson v. Blessig, 11 Ex. 135	476	445, 446	
Clermont v. Tasburgh, 1 Jac. & W. 112	249	Clutterbuck v. Coffin, 4 Scott, N. R. 509	503
Cleveland v. Covington, 3 Strob. 184	765	Coady v. Curry, 8 Daly, 58	150
v. Lenze, 27 Ohio St. 383	500	Coale v. Merryman, 35 Md. 382	208
v. Sterrett, 70 Penn. St. 204	884, 887, 895	Coates v. Collins, L. R. 7 Q. B. 144	298
v. Wolff, 7 Kans. 184	454	v. Sangston, 5 Md. 121	882
Cleworth v. Pickford, 7 M. & W. 314	1011	v. Wilson, 5 Esp. 152	69
Clifford v. Burton, 1 Bing. 199	84	Cobb, ex parte, L. R. 8 Ch. 727	379
v. Parker, 2 M. & G. 909	698	v. Becke, 6 Q. B. 930	507, 728
v. Turrell, 1 Y. & C. 138	683	v. Charter, 32 Conn. 358	149
v. Watts, L. R. 5 C. P. 577	298, 303, 318, 662	v. Hall, 29 Vt. 510	742
Clifton v. Cockburn, 3 My. & K. 76	198	v. Hatfield, 46 N. Y. 533	583
v. Litchfield, 106 Mass. 34	997, 1003	v. Kidd, U. S. C. C. N. Y. 1881, 12 Rep. 769	708
Clinch v. Financial Corp., L. R. 4 Ch. 117	135	Cobbett v. Brock, 20 Beav. 524	161
Cline v. Templeton, 78 Ky. 550	535	v. Hudson, 15 Q. B. 988	84
Clinton v. Strong, 9 Johns. 370	737, 738	Cobleigh v. Young, 15 N. H. 493	141
Clinton Bank v. Graves, 48 Iowa, 228	386	Coburn v. Odell, 30 N. H. 540	338, 955
Clippinger v. Hepbaugh, 5 W. & S. 315	402	v. Wheelock, 34 N. Y. 440	765, 767
Cliquot's Champagne, 3 Wall. 114	269	Cocheo Bank v. Haskell, 51 N. H. 116	130
Clive v. Beaumont, 1 De G. & S. 397	4	Cocheo Man. Co. v. Whittier, 10 N. H. 305	670
Clodfelter v. Hulett, 72 Ind. 137	215, 244, 254, 259, 264, 785	Cochrane v. Green, 9 C. B. N. S. 448	853, 856
Clopper v. Bank, 7 H. & J. 92	1032, 1036	v. Willis, L. R. 1 Ch. 58	181, 298
Clopton v. Cozart, 13 Sm. & M. 363	242	Cock v. Van Etten, 12 Minn. 522	289
v. Martin, 11 Ala. 187	208	Cockell v. Gray, 3 Brod. & B. 186	896
Close v. Phipps, 7 M. & G. 586	737	v. Taylor, 15 Beav. 103	165
Clough v. Clough, 73 Me. 487	681	Cocker's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 1	864
v. Davis, 9 N. H. 500	382	Cocker v. Man. Co., 3 Sumn. 530	871, 882
v. Goggins, 40 Iowa, 325	382, 390	Cockerell v. Aucompte, 2 C. B. N. S. 440	902
v. Hoffman, 5 Wend. 499	571, 621	Cockran v. Irlam, 2 M. & S. 301	180
v. R. R., L. R. 7 Ex. 26	258, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 919	Cockrill v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Mo. 697	985
v. Russell, 55 N. H. 279	537	Cocks v. Izard, 7 Wall. 559	268, 443
v. Shepherd, 31 N. H. 490	382	v. Masterman, 9 B. & C. 902	744
Clow v. Borst, 6 Johns. 37	1008	v. Nash, 9 Bing. 341	831
Clower v. Wynn, 59 Ga. 246	700	v. Simmons, 57 Miss. 183	60, 677
		Cockshott v. Bennett, 2 T. R. 763	41, 380
		Coddington v. Goddard, 16 Gray, 436	270
		v. Paleologo, L. R. 2 Exch. 193	545, 895
		Coffin v. Adams, 131 Mass. 133	768 a, 841

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Coffin v. Dunham, 8 Cush. 404	92	Collier v. Baptist Soc., 8 B. Mon.	
Coffman v. Bank, 5 Lea, 232	151 a	68	528
Cogel v. Kniseley, 89 Ill. 598		v. Slaughter, 20 Ala. 263	397
217, 224, 227, 250, 251		Collingbourne v. Mantell, 5 M. &	
Coggs v. Bernard, 2 Ld. Ray. 909		W. 289	999, 1004
320, 505		Collingridge v. Ins. Co., L. R. 3 Q.	
Cohen v. Wilkinson, 12 Beav. 125	139	B. D. 173	457
Coil v. College, 40 Penn. St. 439		Collins v. Allen, 12 Wend. 356	1017
257, 749		v. Benbury, 5 Ired. 118	647
Coit v. Houston, 3 Johns. Ca. 243		v. Blantern, 2 Wils. 341 ;	
971, 996		1 Smith's L. C., 7th Am.	
v. Ins. Co., 7 Johns. 385	637	ed. 667	338, 340, 415
Colborne, ex parte, L. R. 11 Eq.		v. Boyd, 14 Ala. 505	765
478	846	v. Brook, 5 H. & N. 700	
Colburn v. Patmore, 1 C. M. & R.		731, 794	
73	370	v. Cave, 6 H. & N. 131	242
v. Van Velzer, 11 Fed.		v. Collins, Phill. Eq. 153	
Rep. 795	164	90, 395	
Colby v. Reed, 99 U. S. 560	575	v. Denison, 12 Met. 549	
v. Sampson, 5 Mass. 310	405	214, 238, 239	
v. Stevens, 38 N. H. 191	976	v. Evans, 5 Q. B. 820	214, 237
Colchester v. Lowten, 1 Ves. & B.		v. Godefroy, 1 B. & Ad.	
226	135	950	415
Colcock v. Goode, 3 McCord, 513	230	v. Ins. Co., 17 Ohio St.	
Cole v. Blake, Peake, 179	977	215	134, 810 a
v. Clarke, 3 Wis. 323	708	v. Locke, L. R. 4 Ap. Ca.	
v. Cole, 5 Sneed, 57	113	674	440, 442
v. Hester, 9 Ired. 23		v. Merrell, 2 Met. (Ky.)	
558, 581, 601		163	509
v. Milmine, 88 Ill. 349	453, 453 a	v. Underwood, 33 Ark.	
v. Pennoyer, 14 Ill. 158	36	265	77
v. People, 84 Ill. 216	371	v. Westbury, 2 Bay, 211	
v. Ross, 9 B. Mon. 393	599	149, 737	
v. Sackett, 1 Hill (N. Y.) 516		v. Whigham, 58 Ala. 438	623
954, 956		Collins Iron Co. v. Burkam, 10	
v. Saxby, 3 Esp. 159	62	Mich. 287	463
v. Shurtleff, 41 Vt. 311	500	Collis v. Emett, 1 H. Bl. 313	671
v. Trull, 9 Pick. 325	927, 934	Colly v. State, 55 Ala. 85	257
v. Van Riper, 44 Ill. 58	77	Colman v. R. R., 10 Beav. 1	
Coleman v. Bank, 53 N. Y. 388	202	135, 137, 139, 140	
v. Eyre, 45 N. Y. 38	505, 523	v. Sarel, 3 Bro. C. C. 12	495
v. Frazer, 3 Bush, 300	98, 101	Coloma v. Eaves, 92 U. S. 484	
v. Oil Co., 51 Penn. St.		133, 143	
74	288	Colsell v. Budd, 1 Camp. 27	938
v. Wooley, 10 B. Mon.		Colson v. Arnot, 57 N. Y. 253	795
320	77	v. Thompson, 2 Wheat. 336	3
Coles v. Bowne, 10 Paige, 526	190	Colt v. Clapp, 127 Mass. 476	724
v. Hulme, 8 B. & C. 568	659	v. Ives, 31 Conn. 25	784
v. Pack, L. R. 5 C. P. 65	532	v. McMechen, 6 Johns. 160	319
v. Trecothick, 9 Ves. 234		Colton v. Seavey, 22 Cal. 496	633
161, 165, 180, 516		Col. Ins. Co. v. Cooper, 50 Penn.	
v. Turner, L. R. 1 C. P. 373	591	St. 331	256
Colgin v. Henley, 6 Leigh, 85	523, 532	v. Lawrence, 10 Pet.	
Collamer v. Day, 2 Vt. 144	452	507	593
Collen v. Wright, 8 E. & B. 647	1046	v. Masonheimer, 76	
Collender v. Dinsmore, 55 N. Y.		Penn. St. 138	269, 275
200	630	Columbian Ins. Co. v. Catlett, 12	
Colles v. City Directory Co., 18 N.		Wheat. 383	715
Y. Sup. Ct. 397	139	Colville v. Besly, 2 Denio, 139	297, 748
Colley v. Merrill, 6 Greenl. 50	709	Colwell v. Lawrence, 38 Barb. 643	630

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Colyear v. Mulgrave, 2 Keen, 81		Com. r. Has, 122 Mass. 40	382
	507, 784	v. Henry, 22 Penn. St. 253	
Colyer v. Clay, 7 Beav. 188	186		245, 264
Combe's case, 9 Coke, 75 a	810 a	v. Hyneman, 101 Mass. 30	382
Combe v. Pitt, 3 Burr. 1423	885	v. Johnson, 3 Cush. 454	483
Combes v. Chandler, 33 Oh. St. 178	796	v. Jones, 3 S. & R. 158	180
Comes v. Lamson, 16 Conn. 246	711	v. Judd, 2 Mass. 329	376
Commercial Bk. v. Colt, 15 Barb. 506	845	v. Kendig, 2 Barr, 448	382
		v. McKisson, 8 S. & R. 420	376
		v. McLean, 2 Parsons, 367	415
		v. Mann, 5 W. & S. 403	1071
		v. Miller, 8 S. & R. 452	825
		v. Nesbit, 34 Penn. St. 398	388
		v. Norton, 11 Allen, 266	244
		v. Pease, 16 Mass. 91	483, 484
		v. Shattuck, 4 Cush. 141	
			363, 365
		v. Smith, 1 Brewst. 547	400
		v. Stauffer, 10 Barr, 350	397
		v. Stone, 4 Met. 43	240, 960
		v. Thacher, 97 Mass. 583	458
		v. Vandyke, 57 Penn. St. 34	405
Commercial Ins. Co. v. Spankneble, 52 Ill. 53	338 a	v. Vanlear, 1 S. & R. 248	180
Commercial Union Ins. Co. v. Lister, L. R. 9 Ch. 483	770	v. Warren, 6 Mass. 72	376
Commings v. Scott, L. R. 20 Eq. 11	804	v. Waterman, 122 Mass. 43	371
Commissioners v. Aspinwall, 21 How. 539	133	v. Webster, 1 Bush, 616	321
		v. Wilder, 127 Mass. 1	142
		v. Wolf, 3 S. & R. 48	382
		Com. Nat. Bk. v. Bank, 94 U. S. 437	927, 929
		Compton v. Bank, 96 Ill. 301	
			151 a, 235, 247
		Comstock v. Adams, 23 Kan. 513	394
		v. Howd, 15 Mich. 237	528
		v. Purple, 49 Ill. 158	517
		v. Smith, 7 Johns. 87	
			514, 708
		v. Smith, 26 Mich. 306	695
Com. v. Anes, 18 Pick. 193	361	Conant v. Bellows Falls Co., 29 Vt. 263	130
v. Bacon, 6 S. & R. 322	1071	v. Jackson, 16 Vt. 335	
v. Bank, 11 Metc. 129	1025		104, 239, 254
v. Burdick, 2 Barr, 163	262	Conard v. Ins. Co., 1 Pet. 386	838
v. Callaghan, 2 Va. Ca. 460	407	Conaway v. Gore, 24 Kan. 389	205
v. Chapman, 1 Va. Cas. 138	413	v. Shelton, 3 Ind. 334	63
v. Clark, 14 Gray, 367	963	Conawingo Co. v. Cunningham, 75 Penn. St. 138	884
v. Coe, 115 Mass. 481		Concord v. Delaney, 58 Me. 309	353
	213, 242, 242 a	Concord Bank v. Bellis, 10 Cush. 276	
v. Coleman, 2 Met. (Ky.) 382	321		81, 89, 107 a
v. Davidson, 1 Cush. 33	242	Condit v. R. R., 54 N. Y. 500	327
v. Del. & Hudson Canal Co., 43 Penn. St. 295	442	Condit v. Blackwell, 22 N. J. Eq. 481	378
v. Demain, Brightly, 441	371	Condon v. Jersey City, 43 N. J. L. 452	720
v. Dougherty, 1 Leg. Gaz. (Phil.) 63	400	v. R. R., 14 Grat. 302	594
v. Drew, 19 Pick. 179	262	v. Walker, 1 Yeates, 483	446
v. Dupuy, Brightly, 44; 4 Clark, 1	422	Cong. Soc. in Troy v. Perry, 6 N. H. 164	528
v. Frost, 5 Mass. 53	470		
v. Gilkeson, 1 Phila. 194; 5 Clark, 30	400		
v. Harrington, 3 Pick. 26	374		
v. Harrison, 11 Gray, 308	382, 390		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Conkey v. Bond, 36 N. Y.	427	Cook v. Mix, 11 Conn.	432
	251, 282	v. Moore, 11 Cush.	213
Conklin v. Ogborn, 7 Ind.	553	v. Satterlee, 6 Cow.	108
Conkling v. King, 10 Barb.	372	v. Shipman, 51 Ill.	316
Connemey v. Macfarlane, 97 Penn.		v. Toubmes, 36 Miss.	685
St. 361	512	v. Wright, 1 B. & S.	559
Conn v. Coburn, 7 N. H.	368	Cooke v. Bank, 52 N. Y.	96
	37, 56, 72	v. Clayworth, 18 Ves.	12
v. Conn, 1 Md. Ch.	212		118, 119, 121
v. Penn, 1 Pet. C. C.	496	v. Cooke, L. R. 4 Eq.	77
Connecticut, etc. R. R. v. Newell,		v. Davis, 53 N. Y.	318
31 Vt. 364	732	v. Husbands, 11 Md.	492
Connelly v. Walker, 45 Penn. St.		v. Lamotte, 15 Beav.	234
449	380, 405	v. Murphy, 70 Ill.	96
Conner v. Henderson, 15 Mass.		v. Nathan, 16 Barb.	342
319	186, 919	v. Orne, 37 Ill.	186
v. New York, 2 Sandf.		v. Oxley, 3 T. R.	653
355; 1 Seld. 285	1071		11, 13, 494, 787
Connersville v. Wadleigh, 7		Cookson v. Toole, 59 Ill.	515
Blackf. 102	242	Cooley v. Betts, 24 Wend.	203
Connihan v. Thompson, 111 Mass.		Coolidge v. Blake, 15 Mass.	429
270	249	v. Brigham, 1 Met.	547
Connolly v. Boston, 117 Mass.	64		230, 285, 290
v. Branstler, 3 Bush,	702	v. Payson, 2 Wheat.	66
Connor v. Eddy, 25 Mo.	72	v. Smith, 129 Mass.	554
Conover v. Brown, 29 N. J. Eq.		Coombe v. Greene, 11 M. & W.	
510	786 a	480	586
v. Stillwell, 34 N. J. L.		Coombes v. Dibble, L. R. 1 Ex.	
54	498, 505	248	451
Conquest's case, L. R. 1 Ch. D.		Coombs v. Cordage Co., 102 Mass.	
334	798, 864	572	1043
Conroe v. Birdsall, 1 Johns. Cas.		v. Emery, 14 Me.	404
127	31, 36, 52	v. R. R., 3 H. & N.	510
Conroy v. Gale, 5 Lans.	344	Coon v. Atwell, 46 N. H.	510
Consequa v. Fanning, 3 Johns.		Cooper v. Altimus, 62 Penn. St.	
Ca. 587	463	486	579
Continental Ins. Co. v. Kasey, 25		v. Braswell, 59 Ga.	616
Grat. 268	269	v. Evans, L. R. 4 Eq.	45
Converse v. Blumrich, 14 Mich.		v. Lloyd, 6 C. B. N. S.	519
109	214, 241	v. Lovering, 106 Mass.	77
v. Brainerd, 27 Conn.			214, 245, 259, 260
607	309	v. Macdonald, L. R. 7 Ch.	
v. U. S., 21 How.	463	D. 288	77
Conyers v. Ennis, 2 Mason,	236	v. McIlwain, 58 Ala.	296
Cooch v. Goodman, 2 Q. B.	580	v. Mowry, 16 Mass.	5
	495, 528	v. Newman, 45 N. H.	339
v. Maltby, 23 L. J. Q. B.			283, 291, 742
305	972	v. Page, 24 Me.	73
Cook v. Bradley, 7 Conn.	57	v. Parker, 15 C. B.	822
	512, 536, 684		935, 999
v. Brown, 34 N. H.	460	v. Phibbs, L. R. 2 H. L.	
v. Cook, 69 Penn. St.	443	149	181, 199, 201, 264
v. Duvall, 9 Gill,	460	v. Reilly, 2 Sim.	560
v. Field, 15 Q. B.	460	v. Robinson, 10 M. & W.	
v. Gilman, 34 N. H.	556	694	893
v. Hopewell, 11 Ex.	555	v. Simmons, 7 H. & N.	
v. Jennings, 7 T. R.	381	707	36, 68, 180
v. Knowles, 38 Mich.	316	v. Slade, 6 E. & B.	447
v. Lister, 13 C. B. N. S.	543	v. State, 5 Tex. App.	215
v. McCabe, 53 Wis.	250	v. Twibill, 3 Camp.	286 n.
	326, 714		437

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Cooper v. Whitehouse, 6 C. & P. 545	834	Cothay v. Tute, 3 Camp. 129	879
Cooth v. Jackson, 6 Ves. 12	405	Cottage St. M. E. Ch. v. Kendall, 121 Mass. 528	523, 524, 528, 784
Cope v. Cope, 15 Sim. 118	673	Cottam v. Partridge, 4 M. & G. 271	965
v. Rowlands, 2 M. & W. 149	360, 363 365	Cotten v. McKensie, 57 Miss. 418	360
Copeland v. Boaz, 9 Baxt. 223	91	v. Wescott, 3 Bulst. 187	515
Copley v. Grover, 2 Woods, 494	131	v. Willoughby, 83 N. C. 75	298
Copp v. Lamb, 12 Me. 312	141	Cotterall v. Hindle, L. R. 1 C. P. 186; 2 C. P. 368	943
Coppock v. Bower, 4 M. & W. 361	406, 410	Cottle v. Cleaves, 70 Me. 256	347
Coquillard v. Bearss, 21 Ind. 479	427	Cotton v. Godwin, 7 M. & W. 147	575, 980, 981
Corbett v. Brown, 8 Bing. 33; 1 Moore & S. 85	240	v. Thurland, 5 T. R. 405	354, 454, 729
v. Norcross, 35 N. H. 99	677	Cotzhausen v. Simon, 47 Wis. 103	232 a, 241
Corder v. Morgan, 18 Ves. 344	784	Couch v. Ingersoll, 2 Pick. 292	553
Cordray v. Mordecai, 2 Rich. 518	665	v. Mills, 21 Wend. 424	831
Cork, etc. R. R., in re, L. R. 4 Ch. 748	135, 138, 142, 336, 360, 363	v. Sutton, 1 Grant (Penn.). 114	89
Corkling v. Massey, L. R. 8 C. P. 395	642	Coughenour v. Stauff, 77 Penn. St. 191	902
Corley v. Williams, 1 Bailey, 588	483, 486	Coughlin v. R. R., 71 N. Y. 443	426, 427
Corlies v. Cummings, 6 Cow. 181	943	Coughtry v. Globe Woolen Co., 56 N. Y. 124	228
Corliss v. Shepherd, 28 Me. 550	513	Couldery v. Bartrum, L. R. 19 Ch. D. 394	1001, 1005
Corn Exchange Ins. Co. v. Bab- cock, 42 N. Y. 613	77	Coupland v. Arrowsmith, 18 L. T. N. S. 755	27
Cornelia v. Ellis, 11 Ill. 584	69	Courcier v. Ritter, 4 Wash. C. C. 549	656
Cornell v. Green, 10 S. & R. 14	971, 972, 1029	Courtis v. Cane, 32 Vt. 232	736
v. Jackson, 3 Cush. 506	899	Courtney v. Taylor, 7 Scott, N. R. 749	554
v. Moulton, 3 Denio, 12	895	Courtois v. Carpentier, 1 Wash. C. C. 376	637
Corner v. Sweat, L. R. 1 C. P. 456	1039	Courtright v. Burnes, 2 McCrary, 532	421, 429
Cornfoot v. Fowke, 6 M. & W. 358	214, 270	Couse v. Boyles, 3 Green, Ch. 212	190
Corning v. Colt, 5 Wend. 253	22	Cousinery v. Pearsall, 40 N. Y. S. C. 113	914
Cornish v. Abington, 4 H. & N. 549	202 a	Cousins v. Nantes, 3 Taunt. 513	449
Cornwall, in re, 9 Blatch. 114	377	Couston v. Chapman, L. R. 2 Sc. Ap. 250	916
v. Hoyt, 7 Conn. 420	76	Coutts v. Acworth, L. R. 8 Eq. 558	167, 538
Cornwells v. Kregell, 41 Ill. 394	18	Couturier v. Hastie, 5 H. L. C. 673	179, 298
Corpe v. Overton, 10 Bing. 252; 3 Moore & S. 738	42, 48	Covanhovan v. Hart, 21 Penn. St. 495	377
Corrigan v. Falls Co., 3 Halst. Ch. 489	680	Covell v. Hitchcock, 23 Wend. 611	291, 735
Corser v. Paul, 41 N. H. 24	22	Coventry v. Barton, 17 Johns. 142	405
Cort v. R. R., 17 Q. B. 127	602, 604	v. Gladstone, L. R. 6 Eq. 44	793
Cory v. Cory, 1 Ves. Sen. 19	119	Coverdale v. Eastwood, L. R. 15 Eq. 121	216
v. Gertcken, 2 Madd. 40	54		
Cosgrove v. Ogden, 49 N. Y. 255	945		
Coslake v. Till, 1 Russ. 376	887		
Cost v. Genette, 1 Port. (Ala.) 212	944		
Costar v. Davies, 3 Eng. (Ark.) 213	956		
Costello v. Cady, 102 Mass. 140	963, 999, 1003, 1006		
Costigan v. Gould, 5 Denio, 290	893		
v. Lunt, 104 Mass. 217	825		
v. R. R., 2 Denio, 609	716		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Cowan's Appeal, 74 Penn. St.	329 161	Craven v. R. R., 77 N. C.	289 138
Cowan v. Milbourn, L. R. 2 Ex.		Cravener v. Bowser, 4 Barr,	259 285
230	335, 336, 348, 363, 370	Cravens v. Kiser, 4 Ind.	512 282
Cowasjee v. Thompson, 5 Moore,		Crawford v. Cato, 22 Ga.	594 149
P. C. 165	957	v. Edwards, 33 Mich.	
Cowdrey v. Vandenburg, 101 U.		354	786 a
S. 572	796, 842	v. Harvey, 1 Blackf.	
Cowee v. Cornell, 75 N. Y.	91	382	981
	159, 517	v. Kirksey, 55 Ala.	282 377
Cowell v. Edwards, 2 B. & P.	268 765	v. Morell, 8 John.	253
v. Springs Co., 100 U. S.			509, 624
55	140, 608, 616	v. Scovell, 94 Penn. St.	
Cowen, ex parte, L. R. 2 Ch.	563 379	48	107
Cowie v. Stirling, 6 E. & B.	333	v. Spencer, 8 Cush.	418 204
	795, 819	v. The William Penn,	
Cowles v. Gale, L. R. 7 Ch.	12 887	Peters, C. C. 106; 3	
v. Morgan, 34 Ala.	535 77	Wash. C. C. 484	
v. Ragnet, 14 Ohio,	88 454	473, 475, 476, 478	
v. Townsend, 37 Ala.	77 264	v. Toogood, L.R. 13 Ch.	
Cowling v. Beachum, 7 Moore,		D. 153	892
465	729	v. Wick, 18 Ohio St.	190
Cowper v. Green, 7 M. & W.	633 535		431, 437, 442
Cox v. Brown, 6 Jones, L. 100	570 a	Crawley's case, L. R. 4 Ch.	322 17
v. Henry, 32 Penn. St.	18	Crawshaw v. Roxbury, 7 Gray,	
	684, 899	374	24
v. Hill, 6 Md.	274 836	Crawshay v. Thompson, 4 M. &	
v. McLaughlin, 54 Cal.	605 716	G. 357	248
v. Nat. Bk., 100 U. S.	704 797	Craythorne v. Twinburne, 14 Ves.	
v. Peterson, 30 Ala.	608 327	160	765, 766
v. Prentice, 3 M. & S.	344	Crehore v. Crehore, 97 Mass.	330 265
	189, 205, 752, 755	Creighton v. Comstock, 27 Oh. St.	
v. Reynolds, 7 Ind,	257 259, 282	548	902
v. U. S., 6 Pet.	172 872	Cremer v. Higginson, 1 Mason,	
Coxe v. Bank, 3 Halst.	172 984	338	923, 927, 929
Coxhead v. Mullis, L. R. 3 C. P.		Cresinger v. Welch, 15 Ohio,	156
D. 439	73		47, 60, 61, 63
Cozart v. R. R., 54 Ga.	379 140	Creveling v. Fritts, 34 N. J. Eq.	
Cozzins v. Whitaker, 3 St. & P.		134	239
322	230	Cribbins v. Markwood, 13 Grat.	
Craft v. Isham, 13 Conn.	28 570 a	495	166, 169
v. McConoughy, 79 Ill.	346	Crispell v. Dubois, 4 Barb.	343 161
	430, 442	Crist v. Brindle, 2 Rawle,	121 1024
Cragin v. Tarr, 32 Me.	55 239, 377	Critcher v. Holloway, 64 N. C.	
Craig v. Harper, 3 Cush.	158 11, 13	526	343
v. Henderson, 2 Barr,	261 1021	Critchley, ex parte, 3 D. & L.	527 483
v. Hobbs, 44 Ind.	363 264	Crocker v. Beal, 1 Low.	416 820
v. Missouri, 4 Pet.	410 342, 362	v. Crocker, 31 N. Y.	507 291
Crampton v. Walker, 3 E. & E.		v. Hemp Co., 3 Sumner,	
321	1029	530	882
Crane v. Kildorf, 91 Ill.	567 288	v. Higgins, 7 Conn.	342 786
v. Malony, 39 Iowa,	39 27	v. Lewis, 3 Sumn.	1 237
v. Roberts, 5 Greenl.	419 903	v. R. R., 24 Conn.	249
Cranley v. Hillary, 2 M. & S.	120		4, 10, 24, 25
	873, 990	v. Whitney, 10 Mass.	316 840
Crans v. Hunter, 28 N. Y.	389 533	v. Whitney, 71 N. Y.	161 129
Cranson v. Cranson, 4 Mich.	230 399	Croft v. Lumley, 5 E. & B.	648 923
v. Goss, 107 Mass.	439	Crofts v. Beale, 11 C. B.	172 532
	382, 384, 386, 389, 390	v. Middleton, 8 D. M. G.	192 360
Crapster v. Williams, 21 Kan.		Cromelien v. Manger, 17 Penn. St.	
109	376	169	840

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Crompton v. Pratt, 105 Mass.	255	Crump v. Mead, 3 Mo.	233
	933, 938	v. Morgan, 3 Ired. Eq.	91
Cromwell v. Lovett, 1 Hall, 56	953	Crutcher v. Bridge Co., 8 Humph.	403
v. Sac, 94 U. S. 351; 96			139
U. S. 51	462, 654, 936	Crutchfield v. Stanfield, Sup. Ct.	
v. Tate, 7 Leigh. 301	680	Tex. 1881; 12 Rep. 443	284
Croninger v. Crocker, 62 N. Y.		Cubbedge v. Napier, 62 Ala. 518	463
151	885, 900	Cubberly v. Cubberly, 33 N. J.	
Cronise v. Clark, 4 Md. Ch. 403	36	Eq. 82	785
Cronly v. Hall, 67 N. C. 9	474	v. Scott, 98 Ill. 38	85
Crook v. Seaford, L. R. 6 Ch. 551	141	Cullen v. Butler, 5 M. & S. 461	664
v. Stephen, 5 Bing. N. C.		v. Thomson, 4 Macq. 424	277
688	1038	Cullum v. Bank, 4 Ala. 21	282
Crooke v. M'Tavish, 1 Bing. 307	896	Culver v. Reno Real Est. Co., 91	
Crooks v. Crooks, 34 Oh. St. 610	679	Penn. St. 367	136, 376
Crookshank v. Rose, 5 C. & P. 19		Cumber v. Wane, 1 Strang. 426;	
	511, 930	1 Smith's L. C., 7th Am. ed.	
Crosby v. Bennett, 7 Met. 17	737	595	504, 935, 955, 997, 1001
v. Fitch, 12 Conn. 410	310	Cumberland Bk. v. Hall, 1 Halst.	
v. Redman, 70 Me. 56	954	215	698
Crosland v. Hall, 33 N. J. Eq. 111		Cumberland Co. v. Sherman, 20	
	232 a, 282	Md. 117	198
Cross v. Bloomer, 6 Baxter, 74	427	Cumberland, etc. R. R. v. Baab,	
v. Eglin, 2 B. & Ad. 106	898, 902	9 Watts, 458	414
v. O'Donnell, 44 N. Y. 661	877	Cumming v. Ince, 11 Q. B. 112	150
v. Williams, 7 H. & N. 675	833	Cummings's App., 67 Penn. St.	
v. Williams, 72 Mo. 577	816	404	166, 245, 516
Crosse v. Androes, 1 Roll. Ab. 2		Cummings v. Antes, 19 Penn. St.	
D. pl. 3	52	287	665
Crossgrove v. Himmelrich, 54		v. Dennett, 26 Me. 397	540
Penn. St. 203	285	v. Gann, 52 Penn. St.	
Crossley v. Elworthy, L. R. 12 Eq.		484	24
158	377	v. Henry, 10 Ind. 109	118
v. Maycock, L. R. 18 Eq.		v. Klapp, 5 W. & S. 511	784
180	4, 645, 646	v. Powell, 8 Tex. 80	36, 50
v. Moore, 40 N. J. L. 27		v. Saux, 30 La. An. Pt.	
	353, 380	I. 207	402, 509
Crotty v. Hodges, 4 M. & G. 561	700	Cummins v. Hurlbutt, 92 Penn.	
Crouch v. Crédit Foncier, L. R. 8		St. 165	256 a, 282
Q. B. 374	797, 846	Cundy v. Lindsay, L. R. 3 Ap. Ca.	
Croughton v. Forrest, 17 Mo. 131	736	459	183, 283, 292
Crow v. Rogers, 1 Str. 592	506	v. Marriott, 1 B. & Ad. 696	960
Crowdus v. Shelby, 6 J. J. Marsh.		Cunningham v. Ashbrook, 20 Mo.	
61	765	553	593
Crowe v. Barnicot, L. R. 6 Ch. D.		v. Boston, 15 Gray,	
753	1016	468	740
v. Clay, 9 Ex. 604	959	v. Dwyer, 23 Md.	
Crowell v. Gleason, 1 Fairf. 325		219	540
	148, 150	v. Hall, 4 Allen, 268	906
v. Hospital, 27 N. J. Eq.		v. Irwin, 7 S. & R.	
650	786 a	247	87, 88
v. Osborne, 43 N. J. L.		v. Munroe, 15 Gray,	
335	523	471	149
Crowfoot v. Gurney, 9 Bing. 372	855	v. Shields, 4 Heyw.	
Crowley v. Mining Co., 55 Cal. 270	130	(Tenn.) 44	243
Crowninshield v. Crowninshield,		Cupples v. Galligan, 6 Mo. Ap. 62	979
2 Gray, 524	123	Curlewis v. Clark, 3 Ex. 375	1001, 1006
Croyle v. Moses, 90 Penn. St. 250	248	Curley v. Harris, 11 Allen, 112	1034
Crozer v. Pilling, 4 B. & C. 26	944, 982	v. Vance, 17 Mass. 389	971, 972
Cruess v. Fessler, 39 Cal. 336	260	Curran v. Arkansas, 15 How. 304	1063

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION	D.	SECTION
Currie v. Misa, L. R. 10 Ex. 153			
	493, 956	Dacey v. Ins. Co., 21 Hun, 83	338a
Currier v. Fellows, 7 Foster, N. H. 366	765	Da Costa v. Davis, 1 B. & P. 242	328
v. Gale, 9 Allen, 522	972	v. Jones, Cowp. 729	449
v. Hodgdon, 3 N. H. 32		Dagas v. Donaldsonville, 33 La. An. 671	201
	837, 840	Dailey v. Green, 15 Penn. St. 118	285
v. Knapp, 117 Mass. 324	617	v. Jessup, 72 Mo. 144	198, 199
v. R. R., 31 N. H. 209	776	Dails v. Lloyd, 12 Q. B. 531	778
v. R. R., 48 N. H. 321	442a	Daintree v. Hutchinson, 10 M. & W. 85	634
Curry v. Ins. Co., 10 Pick. 535	256	Dakin v. Williams, 11 Wend. 67	430
v. Powers, 70 N. Y. 212	494	Dalby v. Ins. Co., 15 C. B. 365	456
v. Rogers, 21 N. H. 247	528, 808	Dale v. Cooke, 4 Johns. Ch. 11	
Curtin v. Patton, 11 S. & R. 305			1021, 1022, 1024
	36, 41, 57, 63	v. Knepp, 11 Weekly Notes, 12	388
Curtis v. Aspinwall, 114 Mass. 187	995	v. Robinson, 51 Vt. 20	77
v. Brown, 5 Cush. 488	865	v. Roosevelt, 9 Cow. 307	662
v. Brownell, 42 Mich. 165	109	v. Sollet, 4 Burr. 2133	1010
v. Curtis, 40 Me. 24	1034	Dallar v. Heard, 32 Ga. 604	77
v. Curtis, 5 Gray, 535	400	Dallman v. King, 4 Bing. N. C. 105	591
v. Hubbard, 9 Met. 322	954	Dalton v. Dalton, 14 Nev. 419	181, 282
v. Leavitt, 15 N. Y. 9		v. Gib, 7 Scott, 117	69
	135, 138, 343, 353, 354, 680	v. R. R., 13 C. B. 474	77a
v. Mansfield, 11 Cush. 152	832	Daly v. Bank, 56 Mo. 94	131
v. Parks, 55 Cal. 106	507	Dambmann v. Schulting, 75 N. Y. 55	1032
v. Price, 12 Ves. 89	377	Dame v. Baldwin, 8 Mass. 518	734
v. Rickards, 1 M. & Gr. 46	776	Dameron v. Jamison, 4 Mo. Ap. 299	251
v. Wakefield, 15 Pick. 437	939	Dampf's Appeal, 10 Weekly Notes, 440; 97 Penn. St. 371	79
Curtiss v. Greenbanks, 24 Vt. 536	990	Dana v. Bank, 4 Minn. 385	141
v. McDougal, 26 Oh. St. 66	48	v. Coombs, 6 Greenl. 89	59
v. Martin, 20 Ill. 575	997	v. King, 2 Pick. 155	601
Cusack v. White, 2 Const. Rep. (S. C.) 279	373	v. Shoot, 81 Ill. 468	4
Cushing v. Gore, 15 Mass. 74	953	Danchey v. Drake, 85 N. Y. 407	869
v. Wyman, 38 Me. 589		Dane v. Kirkwall, 8 C. & P. 679	
	285, 730		101, 103, 106, 123
v. Wyman, 44 Me. 121		Danforth v. Dewey, 3 N. H. 79	742.
	997, 999, 1003	v. Streeter, 28 Vt. 490	
Cushman v. Holyoke, 34 Me. 289	911		421, 422
v. Jewell, 7 Hun, 525	576	Daniel v. Bowles, 2 C. & P. 553	2
v. Marshall, 21 Me. 122	285	v. Mitchell, 1 Story, 172	282
Cushwa v. Cushwa, 5 Md. 44	340	v. Robinson, Batty, 650	338a
Custar v. Gas Co., 63 Penn. St. 381	274	Daniel's Trusts, in re, L. R. 1 Ch. D. 375	202
Cutler v. Smith, 43 Vt. 577	208	Daniels v. Barney, 22 Ind. 207	
v. Tufts, 3 Pick. 272	670		357, 725
v. Welsh, 43 N. H. 497	343	v. Harris, L. R. 10 C. P. 1	663
v. Wright, 22 N. Y. 472	654	v. Hatch, 1 Zab. 391	504
Cutter v. Cochrane, 116 Mass. 408		v. Newton, 114 Mass. 530	885
	505, 521, 533	Danube R. R. v. Xenos, 11 C. B. N. S. 152; 13 C. B. N. S. 825	559
v. Emery, 37 N. H. 567	765	Darby v. Boucher, 1 Salk, 279	72
v. Powell, 6 T. R. 320; 2 Smith's L. C. 1		v. Cabanné, 1 Mo. Ap. 126	121
	554, 557, 707, 713, 716, 717	D'Arcy v. Blake, 2 Sch. & Lef. 387	367
v. Reynolds, 8 B. Mon. 596	1005	Darling v. Osborne, 51 Vt. 148	902
Cutts v. Guild, 57 N. Y. 229	187, 746		
v. Thodey, 13 Sim. 206	887		
Cuxon v. Chadley, 3 B. & C. 591			
	728, 857, 858, 999		
Cuyler v. Cuyler, 2 Johns. 186	1033		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Darlington's App., 86 Penn. St.		Davis v. Davis, 6 Ired. Eq. 418	309
512	91	v. Davis, 5 Mo. 183	399
Darlington v. Gray, 5 Whart. 487	856	v. Dodd, 4 Taunt. 602	498, 694
Darnaby v. Darnaby, 14 Bush, 485	91	v. Dudley, 70 Me. 236	60
Darnell v. Rowland, 30 Ind. 342	158	v. Emerson, 17 Me. 64	765
v. Williams, 2 Stark. 145	748	v. Evans, 62 Ala. 401	288
D'Arras v. Keyser, 26 Penn. St.		v. Fox, 59 Mo. 125	144
249	888	v. Garrett, 6 Bing. 716	309
Darrell v. Tibbitts, L. R. 5 Q. B.		v. Goodenow, 27 Vt. 715	719
D. 560	318	v. Hall, 52 Md. 673	742
Darst v. Brockway, 11 Ohio, 462	230	v. Havard, 15 S. & R. 165	417
v. Gale, 83 Ill. 136	140, 142	v. Hedges, L. R. 6 Q. B. 687	1015
v. Thomas, 87 Ill. 222	267	v. Holding, 1 M. & W. 159	
Dart v. Sherwood, 7 Wis. 523	1024		151 a, 484
Dartmouth College v. Woodward,		v. Jackson, 22 Ind. 233	260
4 Wheat. 518	1063	v. Jenney, 1 Metc. 221	698
Darwin v. Rippey, 63 N. C. 318	700	v. Luster, 64 Mo. 43	144
Dashwood v. Jermyn, L. R. 12 Ch.		v. McNalley, 5 Sneed, 583	161
D. 776; 27 W. R. 868	216, 506	v. McVickers, 11 Ill. 327	520
Daughlish v. Tennent, L. R. 2 Q.		v. Marlborough, 1 Swanst.	
B. 49	380	74	411
Davenport v. Bishopp, 2 Y. & C.		v. Mason, 5 T. R. 118	433
451	784	v. Maxwell, 12 Met. 286	717, 718
v. First Cong. Soc., 33		v. Meeker, 5 Johns. 354	260
Wis. 387	501	v. Morgan, 4 B. & C. 8	532
v. Hubbard, 46 Vt. 200	1015	v. Munson, 43 Vt. 676	24, 502
v. R., L. R. 3 Ap. Ca.		v. Murphy, 14 Ind. 158	222
115	28	v. Noaks, 3 J. J. Marsh, 494	1001
v. Rackstrow, 1 C. & P.		v. Notware, 13 Nev. 421	1021
89	818	v. Petit, 27 Vt. 216	523
David v. Park, 103 Mass. 501	245, 749	v. R. R., 131 Mass. 258	
Davidson v. Carter, 55 Iowa, 117			135, 137, 141, 142
	165, 353	v. Seymour, 16 Minn. 210	972
v. Cooper, 11 M. & W.		v. Smith, 15 Mo. 467	311
778; 13 M. & W. 343		v. Smith, Sup. Ct. Mo. 1881;	
695, 696, 697, 680, 702		12 Rep. 695	77
v. Little, 22 Penn. St.		v. Street, 1 C. & P. 18	748
245 159, 165, 167, 169, 517		v. Stuard, S. C. Penn. 1882;	
v. Nichols, 11 Allen, 514	228	11 Weekly Notes, 366	284
v. Young, 38 Ill. 145	89	v. Tallcot, 2 Kern. 184	882
Davies v. Fitton, 2 Dr. & War. 225	208	v. Water Works Co., 54	
v. Humphreys, 6 M. & W.		Iowa, 59	786, 812
153 759, 765, 766, 768, 835		v. Wells, 104 U. S. 159	570
v. Ins. Co., L. R. 8 Ch. D.		v. Wilkinson, 1 Hayw. (N.	
469	249, 484	C.) 334	832
v. Jenkins, L. R. 6 Ch. D.		v. Williams, 57 Miss. 843	677
728	77	v. Zimmerman, 40 Mich. 24	89
Daviess Co. v. Huidekoper, 98 U.		Davis S. M. Co. v. Buckles, 89 Ill.	
S. 98	143	237	927, 929
Davis v. Barney, 2 Gill & J. 382	430	v. Jones, 61 Mo.	
v. Barrington, 30 N. H. 517		409	570
	717, 765	v. Mills, 55 Iowa,	
v. Bechstein, 69 N. Y. 440	842	543	570 a
v. Caldwell, 12 Cush. 512	69, 70	Davison v. Jersey Co., 71 N. Y.	
v. Calloway, 30 Ind. 112		333	919
	756, 785	v. Seymour, 1 Bosw. 88	403
v. Carey, 15 Q. B. 418	305	Davoue v. Fanning, 2 Johns. Ch.	
v. Carlisle, 6 Ala. 707	698, 702	252	161
v. Coburn, 8 Mass. 299	180	Dawes v. Harness, L. R. 10 C. P.	
v. Coleman, 7 Ired. 424	700	166	287

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Dawes v. Peck, 8 T. R. 330	792	Debolt v. Ins. Co., 1 Ohio St. 563	1063
Dawkins v. Gill, 10 Ala. 206	415, 500	Debraham v. Walker, 3 Weekly Notes, 26	84
Dawson v. Dawson, 1 Dev. Eq. 93, 396	677	De Bussche v. Alt, L. R. 8 Ch. D. 286	284, 289, 919
v. Dawson, 18 Mich. 335	265	De Camp v. Hamma, 29 Oh. St. 467	185
v. Ewing, 16 S. & R. 371	982	Decell v. Lewenthal, 57 Miss. 331	67, 360, 368
v. Kearton, 3 Sm. & G. 186	425	Decker v. Livingston, 15 Johns. 479	821, 938
v. Linton, 5 B. & Ald. 521	762	Decorah Bank v. Haug, 52 Iowa, 538	601
v. Massey, 1 B. & B. 219	161	Decreet v. Burt, 7 Cush. 551	765
v. Remnant, 6 Esp. 24	930	Dederick v. Leman, 9 Johns. 333	927
v. Wrench, 3 Ex. 359	569	Deering v. Chapman, 22 Me. 488	338
Day v. Bassett, 102 Mass. 445	617	Defrance v. Austin, 9 Barr, 309	719
v. Caton, 119 Mass. 513	7, 708	Defreeze v. Trumper, 1 Johns. 274	230
v. Everett, 7 Mass. 145	42	De Gaillon v. L'Aigle, 1 Bos. & P. 357	76
v. Holmes, 103 Mass. 306	709	Degraw v. Elmore, 50 N. Y. 1	284
v. Luhke, L. R. 5 Eq. 336	887	De Hoghton v. Money, L. R. 2 Ch. 164	421
v. McAllister, 15 Gray, 433	382, 384, 389	De Jarnatt v. Cooper, S. C. Cal. 1881, 13 Cent. L. J. 251	208
v. Newman, 2 Cox, 77	166	De la Grange v. Tel. Co., 25 La. An. 383	791, 1056
v. Pool, 52 N. Y. 416	189	Delahay v. Ins. Co., 8 Humph. 684	256
v. Raguet, 14 Minn. 273	915	Delamater v. Chappell, 48 Md. 244	589
Dayton v. Moore, 30 N. J. Eq. 543	461, 467	v. Miller, 1 Cow. 75	897
Deacon v. Gridley, 15 C. B. 295	498, 499	Deland v. Man. Co., 7 Pick. 244	1034
Deady v. Harrison, 1 Stark. 50	235	Delano v. Blake, 11 Wend. 85	58
Deal v. Martin, 1 Phila. 500	149	De la Touche, in re, L. R. 10 Eq. 599	204
Dean v. Emerson, 102 Mass. 480	431, 433	De la Vega v. Vianna, 1 B. & Ad. 284	637
v. Ins. Co., 4 Cliff, 575	206	Delaware, etc., Canal Co. v. Bank, 4 Denio, 97	786
v. Ins. Co., 62 N. Y. 642	269	v. Penn. Coal Co., 21 Penn. St. 131	442
v. James, 4 B. & Ad. 546	978	Delaware Ins. Co. v. Gillett, 54 Md. 219	206
v. Mason, 4 Conn. 428	748	Delaware, etc., R. R. v. Bowns, 58 N. Y. 573	547
v. Nelson, 10 Wall. 158	474	De Leon v. Trevino, 49 Tex. 88	352, 357
v. Newhall, 8 T. R. 168	831	Dellone v. Hull, 47 Md. 112	258, 290
v. Richmond, 5 Pick. 461	80	Delmas v. Ins. Co., 14 Wall. 661	477
v. Skiff, 128 Mass. 174	505	Demarest v. McKee, 2 Grant (Penn.) 248	882
v. Williams, 17 Mass. 417	934	De Mautort v. Saunders, 1 B. & Ad. 398	833
v. Yates, 22 Ohio St. 388	291	De Medina v. Grove, 10 Q. B. 152	740
Dean of Bristol v. Jones, 1 E. & E. 484	586	Demeritt v. Meserve, 39 N. H. 521	269
Dearborn v. Bowman, 3 Metc. 155	512, 756		
v. Cross, 7 Cow. 48	1032		
v. Parks, 5 Greenl. 81	865		
Deare v. Soutten, L. R. 9 Eq. 151	86		
Dearle v. Barrett, 2 Ad. & El. 82	973		
Dearman v. Radcliffe, 5 Ala. 192	235		
Deason v. Boyd, 1 Dana, 45	58		
Deaton v. Munroe, 4 Jones Eq. 39	161		
De Barry v. Withers, 44 Penn. St. 356	840		
De Begnis v. Armistead, 10 Bing. 107	349, 354, 362, 365		
Debenham v. Mellon, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 394; 6 Ap. Ca. 24	84		
De Bernales v. Fuller, 14 East, 590 n	840		
Deblois v. Earle, 7 R. I. 26	670		
Debolt v. Carter, 31 Ind. 355	822		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Demesmey v. Gravelin, 56 Ill. 93	679	De Rutte v. Tel. Co., 1 Daly, 547	791
Deming v. Foster, 42 N. H. 165		Des Arts v. Leggett, 16 N. Y. 582	990
220, 221, 224, 904		Desilver's Estate, 5 Rawle, 111	107
v. State, 23 Ind. 416	353	Desmare v. U. S., 93 U. S. 605	352
Demmon v. Bank, 5 Cush. 194	1026	Despatch Line of Packets v. Bel-	
Demuth v. Amer. Inst., 75 N. Y.		lamy Co., 12 N. H. 205	134
502	4, 6, 16, 588	De Tastet v. Shaw, 1 B. & Ald.	
Den v. Farlee, 21 N. J. L. 280	677	664	806, 807
v. Moore, 2 South. 470	483	De Tastett v. Crousillat, 2 Wash.	
v. Partee, 2 Dev. & B. 530	679	C. C. 132	656
Denby v. Graff, 10 Ill. Ap. 195	606	Dethlefs v. Tamsen, 7 Daly, 354	431
Dendy v. Henderson, 11 Ex. 194	433	De Valengin v. Duffy, 14 Pet.	
v. Nicholl, 4 C. B. N. S.		282	943
376	615	Devaux v. Conolly, 8 C. B. 640	520, 748
Denechaud v. Berrey, 48 Ala. 591	77	Devaynes v. Noble, 1 Mer. 527	830
Denison v. Crawford, 48 Iowa,		v. Noble, 2 Russ. & Myl.	
211	402	495	367
Dennett v. Dennett, 44 N. H. 531		Develin v. Riggsbee, 4 Ind. 464	73
98, 107, 110		Devine v. Edwards, 87 Ill. 177	
v. Short, 7 Greenl. 150	904	752, 753	
Dennie v. Hart, 2 Pick. 204	953	v. Edwards, 101 Ill. 138	
Dennis v. Sharman, 31 Ga. 607	382	871, 1012	
v. Twitchell, 10 Met. 180	839	Devlin v. Brady, 36 N. Y. 531	405
Dennison v. Ins. Co., 20 Me. 125	256	v. Mayor, 63 N. Y. 8	848
Denny v. Hancock, L. R. 6 Ch. 1		Devling v. Little, 26 Penn. St. 502	947
190, 214		v. Williamson, 9 Watts,	
v. Lincoln, 5 Mass. 385	405	311	680
v. R. R., 13 Gray, 481		Devoe v. Brandt, 53 N. Y. 462	291
309, 310, 319		De Voss v. Richmond, 18 Grat.	
Denoon v. Ins. Co., L. R. 7 C. P.		338	270
341	455	Devries v. Warren, 82 N. C. 356	1029
Densmore Oil Co. v. Densmore, 64		Dew v. Parsons, 2 B. & Ald. 562	
Penn. St. 43	252	149, 159, 738	
Dent v. Bennett, 7 Sim. 539; 4		De Wahl v. Braune, 1 H. & N. 178	76
My. & Cr. 269		Deweese v. Cheek, 35 Ind. 514	1006
103, 159, 161, 162, 168		Dewey v. Erie, 14 Penn. St. 211	589
v. Dunn, 3 Camp. 296	972	v. Humphrey, 5 Pick. 187	980
Denton v. Macneil, L. R. 2 Eq.		v. School Dist., 43 Mich.	
352	264	480	714
v. R. R., 5 E. & B. 860	25, 801	Dewitt v. Brisbane, 16 N. Y. 508	351
De Oleaga v. West Cumb. Iron		De Witt v. Walton, 5 Seld. 571	810 a
Co., L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 472	886	De Wolf v. Johnson, 10 Wheat.	
Depau v. Humphreys, 8 Mart. N.		367	637
S. 1	462, 463, 637	De Worms v. Mellier, L. R. 16 Eq.	
Deposit Ass. Co. v. Ayscough, 6		554	594
E. & B. 761	287	De Wütz v. Hendricks, 2 Bing.	
Derby v. Johnson, 21 Vt. 17		314	479
708, 712, 716		Dexter v. Hall, 15 Wall. 9	100, 123
Dering v. Winchelsea, 1 Cox, 318;		v. Nelson, 6 Ala. 68	421
2 B. & P. 270; 1 Wh. & T. L.		v. Norton, 47 N. Y. 62	
C. 4th Am. ed. 120	765, 766, 829	300, 311, 314, 547	
De Rivaflinoli v. Corsetti, 4 Paige,		v. Snow, 12 Cush. 594	344
264	323	Dey v. Dox, 9 Wend. 133	558
Dermott v. Jones, 2 Wall. 1	302, 311	Deyoe v. Jamison, 33 Mich. 94	576
Derocher v. Mills, 58 Me. 217	34	De Zeng v. Bailey, 9 Wend. 336	831
De Roo v. Foster, 12 C. B. N. S.		Dibblee v. Sheldon, 10 Blatch.	
272	52	178	288
De Rothschild v. Royal Mail, 7		Dick v. Cooper, 24 Penn. St. 217	443
Exch. 734	327	Dickason v. Williams, 129 Mass.	
Derry v. Derry, 74 Ind. 560	537	182	721

TABLE OF CASES

	SECTION		SECTION
Dicker v. Jackson, 6 C. B. 103	581	Di Sora v. Phillips, 10 H. L. C.	
Dickerson v. Evans, 84 Ill. 451	291	638	647
v. Pyle, 4 Phila. 259	427	Ditch v. Vollhardt, 82 Ill. 134	938
Dickey v. Linscott, 20 Me. 453		Ditchburn v. Goldsmith, 4 Camp.	
323, 547, 714		152	449
Dickin, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 20 Eq. 767	929	Ditson v. Randall, 33 Me. 202	291
Dickinson v. Burrell, L. R. 1 Eq.		Diversy v. Kellogg, 44 Ill. 114	877
337	423	Dix v. Cobb, 4 Mass. 508	842, 844
v. Dodds, L. R. 2 Ch.		Dixie v. Abbott, 7 Cush. 610	339
D. 463	4, 11, 12, 13	Dixon, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 4 C. D. 133	1023
v. Edwards, 77 N. Y.		Dixon v. Adams, Cro. Eliz. 538	500
573	462, 463	v. Clark, 5 C. B. 365	
v. Gay, 7 Allen, 29		971, 972, 979, 981	
910, 918		v. Fletcher, 3 M. & W. 146	
v. Hall, 14 Pick. 217	520	898, 916	
v. Lee, 106 Mass. 557	244	v. Hurrell, 8 C. & P. 717	86
v. Richmond, 97 Mass.		v. Merritt, 21 Minn. 196	45
45	382	v. Olmstead, 9 Vt. 310	
v. Valpy, 10 B. & C.		340, 354, 415, 483	
128	830	v. Walker, 7 M. & W. 214	972
Dickson v. Swansea R. R., L. R.		Doane v. Eldridge, 16 Gray, 254	695
4 Q. B. 44	846	Dob v. Halsey, 16 Johns. 34	814
v. Tel. Co., L. R. 2 C. P.		Dobell v. Stevens, 3 B. & C. 623	260
D. 62; 3 C. P. D. 1		Dobyns v. McGovern, 15 Mo. 662	768
27, 215, 240, 791		Dockray v. Dunn, 37 Me. 442	523
v. Thomas, 97 Penn. St.		Dodd v. Mitchell, 77 Ind. 388	662
278	453	v. Seymour, 21 Conn. 476	3
v. Zizinia, 10 C. B. 602		v. Wakeman, 26 N. J. Eq.	
220, 225, 914		484	730
Dietz v. Harder, 72 Ind. 208	695	Dodge, <i>in re</i> , 17 Bk. Reg. 504	463
Digby v. Atkinson, 4 Camp, 275	318	Dodge v. Adams, 19 Pick. 429	494, 512
Diggle v. Higgs, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 422	451	v. Burdell, 13 Conn. 170	494
Dill v. Bowen, 54 Ind. 204	47	v. Emerson, 34 Me. 96	599
v. Shahan, 25 Ala. 694	198	v. Emerson, 131 Mass. 467	954
v. Wareham, 7 Met. 438	742	v. Gardiner, 31 N. Y. 239	553
v. White, 52 Wis. 456	826	v. Greeley, 31 Me. 343	558, 559
Diller v. Brubaker, 52 Penn. St.		v. Perkins, 9 Pick. 368	576
498	161	v. Stiles, 26 Conn. 463	500
v. Johnson, 37 Tex. 47	144	v. Tileston, 12 Pick. 328	724
Dillinger's App., 35 Penn. St.		v. Woolsey, 18 How. 331	139
357	395	Dodgson v. Bell, 5 Exch. 967	82
Dillingham v. State, 5 Oh. St. 280	257	Dodson v. Harris, 10 Ala. 566	382, 384
Dilworth v. Bradner, 85 Penn. St.		v. McCauley, 62 Ga. 130	486
238	214	Doe v. Abernathy, 7 Blackf. 442	
Diman v. R. R., 5 R. I. 130	196	47, 60	
Dimmick v. Lockwood, 10 Wend.		v. Jesson, 6 East, 80	76
142	899	v. Oliver, 2 Smith's L. C. 7th	
Dimmock v. Hallett, L. R. 2 Ch.		Am. ed. 605	202 a
21	260, 261, 267	Doggett v. Emerson, 3 Story, 700	
Dines v. Wolfe, L. R. 2 P. C. 280	729	214, 221, 242, 282, 288, 289	
Dingeldein v. R. R., 37 N. Y. 575		v. Lane, 12 Mo. 215	161
786, 786 a, 853		Dohoney v. Dohoney, 7 Bush, 217	382
Dingley v. Oler, 11 Fed. Rep. 372		Dolan v. Green, 110 Mass. 322	877
885, 885 a		Dole v. Lincoln, 31 Me. 422	496
v. Robinson, 5 Greenl.		Doloret v. Rothschild, 1 Sim. & S.	
127	288	590	887
Dinsmore v. Tidball, 34 Ohio St.		Domestic S. M. Co. v. Saylor, 86	
411	570 a	Penn. St. 287	1029
Disborough v. Neilson, 3 Johns.		Dominick v. Michael, 4 Sandf.	
Cas. 81	620	374	887

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Donaldson v. Benton, 4 Dev. & B.		Douglas v. Patrick, 3 T. R.	683
435	985		978, 982, 983
v. Cothran, 60 Ga.	603	Douglass v. Howland, 24 Wend.	
v. Farwell, 93 U. S.		35	570, 570 a
631	258, 282	v. McChesney, 2 Rand.	
v. Newman, 9 Mo. Ap.		Va. 109	467
235	230	v. Reynolds, 7 Pet.	113
Donallen v. Lennox, 6 Dana,	89		570, 570 a
	338, 339	v. Satterlee, 11 Johns.	
Doniol v. Ins. Co., 34 N. J. Eq.	30	16	947
Donkersley v. Levy, 38 Mich.	54	v. White, 3 Barb. Ch.	
	728, 785	621	504, 1003
Donnell v. Byern, 69 Mo.	468	Dounce v. Dow, 57 N. Y.	16; 64
v. Ins. Co., 2 Sumn.	366	N. Y. 411	
	666, 670		221, 227, 561, 562, 903, 904
v. Swain, 2 Penn. L. J.		Douville v. Merrick, 25 Wis.	688
393	513	Dovey's Appeal, 97 Penn. St.	153
Donnelly v. State, 2 Dutch.	601	Dow v. Clark, 7 Gray,	198
	251, 252	v. Eyster, 79 Ill.	254
Donnison v. Café Co., 45 L. T. N.		v. Sanborn, 3 Allen,	181
S. 187	3	v. Sudbury, 5 Met.	73
Donohue v. Woodbury, 6 Cush.		Dowdall v. R. R., 13 Blatch.	403
148	1000	Dowdy v. McLellan, 52 Ga.	408
Donovan v. Donovan, 9 Allen,		Down v. Hatcher, 10 A. & E.	121
140	265		504, 935, 997
v. Dunning, 69 Mo.	436	Downer v. Frizzle, 10 Vt.	541
Dooley v. Gallagher, 3 Hughes C.		v. Sinclair, 15 Vt.	495
C. 214	224	v. Smith, 32 Vt.	1
v. Ins. Co., 3 Hughes C.			282, 285, 730
C. 221	1034	v. Thompson, 6 Hill, N.	
Doolittle v. Dwight, 2 Met.	561	Y. 208	712
Doorman v. Jenkins, 2 A. & E.	256	Downes v. Green, 12 M. & W.	481
Doran v. Mullen, 78 Ill.	342	Downey v. O'Donnell, 86 Ill.	49
Doremus v. Selden, 19 Johns.	213	Downing v. Plate, 90 Ill.	268
Dorlan v. Mulhollan, 10 Oh. St.		v. R. R., 40 N. H.	230
192	25 a	Downs v. Marsh, 29 Conn.	409
Dormer v. Williams, 1 Curteis,		Dows v. Cobb, 12 Barb.	310
870	265	v. Greene, 16 Barb.	72
Dorr v. Fisher, 1 Cush.	271	v. Greene, 32 Barb.	490
v. Munsell, 13 Johns.	430	v. Morewood, 10 Barb.	183
Dorsey v. Gassaway, 2 Har. & J.			929, 933
402	924	Dowse's case, L. R. 3 C. D.	384
v. Jackman, 1 S. & R.	42	Dowse v. Coxe, 3 Bing.	20
v. Packwood, 12 How.	126	Dox v. Dey, 3 Wend.	356
	494, 523	Doyle v. Donnelly, 56 Me.	27
v. Watson, 14 Mo.	59	v. R. R., 118 Mass.	195
v. Wayman, 6 Gill,	59	Drake v. Glover, 30 Ala.	382
Dorsey Rake Co. v. Bradley Co.,		v. Hill, 53 Iowa,	37
12 Blatch.	202	v. Latham, 50 Ill.	270
Dorsheimer v. Bucher, 7 S. & R.	9	v. Mitchell, 3 East,	251
Doster v. Brown, 25 Ga.	24		684, 996
Doty v. Bank, 16 Oh. St.	133	v. Ramsay, 50 Mo.	251
v. Mitchell, 9 Sm. & M.	435	v. Vorse, 52 Iowa,	417
v. Wilson, 14 Johns.	378	Draper v. Mass. Steam Heating	
	405, 514, 763, 840	Co., 5 Allen,	338
Doubleday v. Kress, 50 N. Y.	410	v. Snow, 20 N. Y.	331
Dougherty v. Whitehead, 31 Mo.		v. Weld, 13 Gray,	580
255	708	v. Wood, 112 Mass.	315
Douglas v. Holme, 4 P. & D.		Draughan v. Bunting, 9 Ired.	10
685	776	Drennan v. Douglas, 102 Ill.	341

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Dresel v. Jordan, 104 Mass. 407	2, 888	Dula v. Cowles, 2 Jones N. C.	987
Dresser v. Norwood, 17 C. B. N. S. 466	1023	Dulany v. Green, 4 Harring. Del. 285	119
Dresser Man. Co. v. Waterston, 3 Met. Mass. 9	608	v. Rogers, 50 Md. 524	207
Drew v. Nunn, L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 661	12, 110, 117 a	Dulty v. Brownfield, 1 Barr, 497	37
v. Swift, 46 N. Y. 204	202, 668	Dunbar v. Dunbar, 5 Gray, 103	1037
Drexler v. Tyrrell, 15 Nev. 115	340, 446	v. McFall, 9 Humph. 505	421
Drinkwater v. Drinkwater, 4 Mass. 354	377	v. Todd, 6 Johns. 257	45
v. Goodwin, Cowp. 251	945	Duncan's App., 43 Penn. St. 67	266, 399
Driver v. Burton, 17 Q. B. 989	756, 768	Duncan v. Baker, 21 Kan. 99	714
Druiff v. Parker, L. R. 5 Eq. 131	206	v. Benson, 3 Ex. 644	764
Drummond v. Hopper, 4 Harring. 327	118	v. Cafe, 2 M. & W. 244	729
v. Prestman, 12 Wheat. 515	25 a	v. Findlay, 6 S. & R. 235	609
Drury v. Cross, 7 Wall. 299	408	v. Gibson, 45 Mo. 352	311
v. Defontaine, 1 Taunt. 131	365, 382, 385	v. Heller, 13 S. C. 94	570 a
v. Drury, 2 Eden, 39	73	v. Helm, 22 La. An. 418	463
v. Foster, 2 Wal. 24	89	v. Hogue, 24 Miss. 671	242
Dryden v. Kellogg, 2 Mo. Ap. 87	231	v. Kirkpatrick, 13 S. & R. 292	740
Dryer v. Lewis, 57 Ala. 551	716	v. Lyon, 3 Johns. Ch. 351	1013
Drysdale v. Mace, 2 Sm. & G. 225	249	v. McCullough, 4 S. & R. 483	288
Dublin, etc. R. R. v. Black, 8 Exch. 181	33	v. Sanders, 50 Ill. 475	516
Dubois v. Canal Co., 4 Wend. 285	558, 712, 810 a	v. Topham, 8 C. B. 225	18, 886
v. Ludert, 5 Taunt. 609	833	v. U. S., 7 Pet. 435	872
Dubose v. Wheddon, 4 McCord, 221	64, 65, 66	Duncklee v. Mill Co., 8 Fost. 245	845
Duchman v. Hagerty, 6 Watts, 65	338	Dung v. Parker, 52 N. Y. 494	243
Duckworth v. Alison, 1 M. & W. 412	1029	Dunham v. Chatham, 21 Tex. 231	202
Dudgeon v. Pembroke, L. R. 9 Q. B. 581 ; 2 Ap. Cas. 284	350, 652	v. Jackson, 6 Wend. 22	986
Duer v. James, 42 Md. 492	677	v. Presby, 120 Mass. 285	349
Duff v. Budd, 3 B. & B. 177	792	v. Wright, 53 Penn. St. 167	79
v. East India Co., 15 Ves. 198	946	Dunlap v. Hales, 2 Jones N. C. 381	63
Duffany v. Ferguson, 68 N. Y. 482	242	v. Hunting, 2 Denio, 643	576
Duffey v. Duffey, 44 Penn. St. 399	719	v. Petrie, 35 Miss. 590	580
Duffield v. Scott, 3 T. R. 374	570 a	Dunlop v. Gregory, 6 Seld. 241	433
Dugan v. Anderson, 36 Md. 567	580	v. Higgins, 1 H. L. C. 381	9, 18, 19
Duhme v. Young, 3 Bush, 343	377	v. Lambert, 6 Cl. & F. 600	877, 880
Duke v. Asbee, 11 Ired. 112	406, 407	Dunman v. Strother, 1 Tex. 89	449
v. Harper, 2 Mo. Ap. 1 ; 66 Mo. 51	421, 422, 427, 429	Dunn v. Chambers, 4 Barb. 376	159, 518
Duke of Norfolk v. Worthy, 1 Camp. 337	186	v. Hereford, 1 Wy. Ter. 206	716
Dukes v. Spangler, 35 Oh. St. 119	89, 677	v. Marston, 34 Me. 379	882, 990
		v. Record, 63 Me. 17	161, 426
		v. Remington, 9 Neb. 82	242
		v. Slee, Holt, N. P. 399	765
		v. Snell, 15 Mass. 481	526
		Dunnage v. White, 1 Swanst. 137	198
		Dunne v. English, L. R. 18 Eq. 524	161, 378
		Dunning v. Leavitt, 85 N. Y. 30	785
		v. Roberts, 35 Barb. 463	27
		Dunton v. Brown, 31 Mich. 182	34

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Dupee v. Boston Water Power Co., 114 Mass. 37	137	Eagan v. Call, 34 Penn St. 236	230
Duquesne Bank's App., 74 Penn. St. 426	461, 469	Eagle v. Smith, 4 Houston, 293	24
Du Quoin Co. v. Thorwell, 3 Ill. Ap. 394	716	Eagle Bank v. Rigney, 33 N. Y. 613	467
Durant v. Bacot, 13 N. J. Eq. 201	207	v. Smith, 5 Conn. 71	723, 744, 960
v. Rogers, 87 Ill. 508	270	Eagle Co. v. Defries, 94 Ill. 598	1035
Duress v. Horneffer, 15 Wis. 195	91	Eagle Fire Co. v. Lent, 6 Paige, 635	45, 59, 61
Durgin v. Dyer, 68 Me. 143	360	Eaglesfield v. Londonderry, L. R. 4 Ch. D. 693	198, 275, 277
Durham v. Bischof, 47 Md. 211	840, 858	Eagleton v. Gutteridge, 11 M. & W. 465	697
v. Wadlington, 2 Strob. Eq. 258	198, 532	Eakle v. Reynolds, 54 Md. 305	159, 161
Durkee v. R. R., 29 Vt. 127	27	Eames v. Sweetser, 101 Mass. 78	69, 84
Durnford v. Messiter, 5 M. & S. 446	756, 809	Earl v. Bryan, Phill. Eq. (N. C.) 278	282
Durrant v. Comm'ers, L. R. 6 Q. B. D. 234	752	v. Page, 6 N. H. 477	748
Dutch v. Warren, 2 Burr. 1010	742	v. Peck, 64 N. Y. 596	516
Dutchess Co. Ins. Co. v. Hachfield, 73 N. Y. 226	795	Earle v. Coburn, 130 Mass. 596	707, 708
Dutton v. Dutton, 30 Ind. 452	90, 395	v. Earle, 1 Harr. 273	981
v. Gerrish, 9 Cush. 89	906	v. Hopwood, 9 C. B. N. S. 566	427
v. Marsh, L. R. 6 Q. B. 361	134, 810 a, 811	v. Oliver, 2 Ex. 71	513
v. Pool, 1 Vent. 318	784	v. Reed, 10 Met. 387	37, 65, 66, 511
v. Solomonson, 3 B. & P. 582	549, 792, 877	Earnest v. Parke, 4 Rawle, 452	513
v. Willner, 52 N. Y. 312	730	East Anglian R. R. v. Lythgoe, 10 C. B. 726	1029
Duval v. Mowry, 6 R. I. 479	285	v. R. R., 11 C. B. 775	135, 137
Duvall v. Craig, 2 Wheat. 45	810 a, 817	East Hartford v. Bridge Co., 17 Conn. 79; 10 How. 511	1066
Duvergier v. Fellows, 5 Bing. 248; 10 B. & C. 826	301	East Line R. R. v. Garrett, 52 Tex. 133	278
Duvoll v. Wilson, 9 Barb. 487	494	East River Bank v. Hoyt, 32 N. Y. 119	467
Dwight v. Chase, 3 Ill. Ap. 67	214	East St. Louis v. Gas Co., 98 Ill. 415	143
v. Emerson, 2 N. H. 159	573	Easter v. Allen, 8 Allen, 7	733
v. Hamilton, 113 Mass. 175	433	Easterlin v. Rylander, 59 Ga. 292	468
Dwinal v. Holmes, 33 Me. 172	677	Eastern Co. R. R. v. Hawkes, 5 H. L. C. 331	135
Dwinel v. Howard, 30 Me. 258	580, 607	Eastern Union R. R. v. Hart, 8 Ex. 116	139
D'Wolf v. Rabaud, 1 Pet. 476	536	Eastland v. Longshorn, 1 N. & McC. 194	977
Dyer v. Covington, 19 Penn. St. 200	599	Eastman v. Bank, 1 N. H. 23	128
v. Hargrave, 10 Ves. Jr. 506	224, 227, 245	v. Plumer, 46 N. H. 464	166, 518, 888, 890
v. Homer, 22 Pick. 253	235	v. Rapids, 21 Iowa, 590	873
v. Tilton, 23 Vt. 313	262	v. Wright, 6 Pick. 316	1035, 1038
v. Wightman, 66 Penn. St. 425	318	Easton v. Worthington, 5 S. & R. 130	734
Dyett v. Pendleton, 8 Cow. 727	374	Eastwood v. Kenyon, 11 A. & E. 438	512, 513, 514
Dyott's Est., 2 Watts & S. 557	726		
E.			
Eaden v. Titchmarsh, 1 A. & E. 691	825		
Eads v. Williams, 4 De G. M. & G. 674	890		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Eaton v. Avery, 83 N. Y. 31	271, 276, 279	Edmunds v. Groves, 2 M. & W.	454
v. Bell, 5 B. & Al. 34	467, 709	v. Harper, 31 Grat.	1026
v. Eaton, 37 N. J. L. 108	107, 111	Edmundson v. Penny, 1 Barr, 334	506
v. Gay, 44 Mich. 431	22	Edson v. Fuller, 22 N. H. 183	840
v. Hill, 50 N. H. 235	52, 53	v. Weston, 7 Cow. 278	320
v. Lincoln, 13 Mass. 424	935, 1006	Edwards v. Baugh, 11 M. & W.	533
v. Lyon, 3 Ves. Jr. 690	300, 649	v. Brown, 1 C. & J. 307	185, 201
v. Perry, 29 Mo. 96	118	v. Burt, 2 D. M. & G.	169
v. Smith, 20 Pick. 150	630, 631	v. Chapman, 1 M. & W.	996
Eberle v. Mehrbach, 55 N. Y. 682	382	v. Coombe, L. R. 7 C. P.	1005
Eberman v. Reitzel, 1 W. & S.	181	v. Cottrell, 43 Iowa, 194	963
Eberts v. Eberts, 55 Penn. St.	110	v. Goldsmith, 16 Penn.	631, 647
Ebsworth v. Ins. Co., L. R. 8 C.	455	St. 43	938, 1005
Eccles. Commis. v. R. R., L. R. 4	135	v. Hancher, L. R. 1 C.	223
Eccleston v. Clipsham, 1 Wms.	816	P. D. 111	729
Saund. 153	677	v. Hathaway, 1 Phila.	972
Eckinan v. Eckman, 55 Penn. St.	269	547	1062, 1067
Eckstein v. Frank, 1 Daly, 334	52	v. Hodding, 5 Taunt.	726
v. Reynolds, 7 Ad. & E.	80	815	249
v. Shoemaker, 3 Whart.	15	v. Ins. Co., 21 Wend.	262
Eclipse Wind Mill Co. v. Thor-	945	467	421
son, 46 Iowa, 181	700	v. Kearzey, 96 U. S. 595	402
Eddy v. Bond, 19 Me. 461	311	1062, 1067	131
v. Clement, 38 Vt. 486	150, 152	v. Lowndes, 1 E. & B.	202
v. Herrin, 17 Me. 338	785	81	68
v. Roberts, 17 Ill. 505	664	v. M'Leay, Coop. 308;	239
Edelman v. Yeakel, 27 Penn. St.	634	2 Swanst. 287	198
26	599	v. Owen, 15 Ohio, 500	403
Eden v. Blake, 13 M. & W. 614	483	v. Parkhurst, 21 Vt.	450
Edgar v. Boies, 11 S. & R. 445	451, 452	472	377
Edgcombe v. Rodd, 5 East, 294	765, 835	v. R. R., 1 My. & C.	708
Edgell v. McLaughlin, 6 Whart.	888	650	888
176	34, 47, 48	v. R. R., L. R. 6 Q. B.	97
Edger v. Knapp, 6 Scott N. R. 707;	505	D. 287	512, 513
5 M. & G. 753	730	v. Tipton, 77 N. C. 222	822, 827
Edgerton v. Peckham, 11 Paige,	947	v. Towels, 5 M. & G.	239
352	208, 282	624	
v. Wolf, 6 Gray, 453		v. Warner, 35 Conn. 517	
Edgware Highway v. Gas Co., L.		Ege v. Koonts, 3 Barr, 109	
R. 10 Q. B. 92		Egerton v. Earl Brownlow, 4 H.	
Edick v. Crim, 10 Barb. 445		L. C. 1	
Edinboro Academy v. Robinson,		v. Furzeman, 1 C. & P.	
37 Penn. St. 210		613	
Edmeads v. Newman, 1 B. & C.		Egery v. Johnson, 70 Me. 258	
418		Eggleston v. Boardman, 37 Mich.	
Edmonds v. Crenshaw, 14 Pet. 166		14	
Edmund's App., 59 Penn. St. 220		Egmont v. Smith, L. R. 6 Ch. D.	
		469	
		Ehle v. Judson, 25 Wend. 97	
			512, 513
		v. Purdy, 6 Wend. 629	822, 827
		Ehrisman v. Roberts, 68 Penn.	
		St. 308	239

TABLE OF CASES.

SECTION	SECTION
Richelberger v. Finley, 7 Har. & J. 381 953	Ellis v. Hamlen, 3 Taunt. 52 312
Richholz v. Barrister, 17 C. B. N. S. 708 230, 520, 746	v. Hammond, 57 Ga. 179 382, 384
Ekins v. Tresham, 1 Lev. 102 260	v. Higgins, 32 Me. 34 340
Ela v. Card, 2 N. H. 175 899	v. McLemore, 1 Bailey, 13 816
Eland v. Karr, 1 East, 375 1012	v. Mortimer, 1 B. & P. N. R. 257 16, 589, 597
Elborough v. Ayres, L. R., 10 Eq. 367 421, 422, 425, 429	v. Paige, 1 Pick. 43 882
Elder's App., 39 Mich. 474 1021	v. Sisson, 96 Ill. 105 842
Elder v. Allison, 45 Ga. 13 241	v. Tel. Co., 13 Allen, 226 438, 791
v. Thompson, 13 Gray, 91 833	v. Thompson, 3 M. & W. 445 882
Elderton v. Emmens, 4 C. B. 479, 498; 4 H. L. C. 624 716	Ellison v. Ellison, 6 Ves. 656 495
Eldred v. Bank, 71 Ind. 543 831	Ellmaker v. Ellmaker, 4 Watts, 89 632
Eldredge v. Smith, 13 Allen, 140 910	v. Ins. Co., 6 W. & S. 439 1029
Eldridge v. Rowe, 2 Gilm. 91 717	Elmore v. Sands, 54 N. Y. 512 22, 572
v. Wadleigh, 3 Fairf. 371 230	Elmwood v. Marcy, 92 U. S. 289 367
v. Walker, 60 Ill. 230 378	Elphick v. Barnes, L. R. 5 C. P. D. 321 317, 590
Eley v. Assurance Co., L. R. 1 Ex. D. 88 784, 808	Elston v. Chicago, 40 Ill. 514 149, 738
Elgar v. Watson, 1 Car. & M. 494 975	v. Jasper, 45 Tex. 409 102, 107, 123
Eliason v. Henshaw, 4 Wheat. 225 4, 9, 15	Eltham v. Kingsman, 1 B. & Ald. 683 449, 729
Eliot v. Gower, 12 R. I. 79 77	Elting v. Vanderlyn, 4 Johns. 237 532
Elkins v. Parkhurst, 17 Vt. 105 365, 620, 913	Elves v. Crofts, 10 C. B. 241 432, 433
v. Trans. Co., 2 Weekly Notes, 403 652	Elwood v. Tel. Co., 45 N. Y. 549 791, 1056
Ellen v. Topp, 6 Ex. 424 607, 613	Elworthy v. Bird, 2 Sim. & S. 372 486
Ellershaw v. Magniac, 6 Ex. 570 877, 878	Ely v. Ely, 80 Ill. 532 318
Ellicott v. Peterson, 4 Md. 476 512	v. Stewart, 2 Md. 408 242, 243, 244
Elliott's case, 2 East, P. C. 951 659	v. Wolcott, 4 Allen, 506 495
Elliott v. Bently, 17 Wis. 591 91	Elysville Co. v. Okisko, 5 Md. 152 128
v. Boaz, 9 Ala. 772 246	Emerine v. O'Brien, 36 Ohio St. 491 960
v. Elliott, 5 Binn. 1 161	Emerson v. Baylies, 19 Pick. 55 723
v. Horton, 28 Grat. 766 202	v. Blonden, 1 Esp. 142 84
v. Ince, 7 De G. M. & G. 475 107, 108, 111	v. Brigham, 10 Mass. 197 221, 230
v. McClelland, 17 Ala. 206 422, 427	v. Graff, 29 Penn. St. 358 570, 607
v. Merryman, 1 Wh. & T. L. C. Eq. 4th Am. ed. 74 948	v. Hat Co., 12 Mass. 237 180
v. Richardson, L. R. 5 C. P. 744 379, 415	v. McNamara, 41 Me. 565 285
v. Sleeper, 2 N. H. 525 956	v. White, 10 Gray, 351 935, 971
v. Swartwout, 10 Pet. 137 149, 198, 755	Emery v. Bank, 25 Oh. St. 360 793
v. Thomas, 3 M. & W. 170 589	v. Hoyt, 46 Ill. 258 98, 103, 110
Ellis v. Barker, L. R. 7 Ch. 104 161	v. Kempton, 2 Gray, 257 346
v. Bitzer, 2 Ohio, 89 999	v. Owings, 6 Gill, 191 647
v. Clark, 110 Mass. 389 507	v. Tichout, 13 Vt. 15 932
v. Crawford, 39 Cal. 523 803	v. Wase, 8 Ves. 505 593
v. Ellis, 5 Mod. 368; 1 Ld. Raym. 344 72	Emigrant Co. v. Wright Co., 97 U. S. 339 518
v. Emmanuel, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 157 765	
v. Esson, 50 Wis. 138 1036	

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Emmens v. Elderton, 4 H. L. C.		Estabrook v. Smith, 6 Gray, 572	
624	674, 716		230, 540
Emmerson's case, L. R. 1 Ch. 433	298	v. Swett, 116 Mass.	
Emmerton v. Matthews, 7 H. & N.		303	285
586	222, 223, 248, 904, 912	Estell v. Meyers, 54 Miss. 174	245
Emmett v. Norton, 8 C. & P. 506	86, 88	Etheridge v. Cromwell, 8 Wend.	
Emmons v. Littlefield, 13 Me. 233	495	629	421
v. Moore, 85 Ill. 304	254	v. Thompson, 7 Ired.	
v. Murray, 16 N. H. 385		127	505
	60, 63	Eubanks v. State, 3 Heisk. 488	458
Empire Trans. Co, v. Steele, 70		Eufaula v. McNab, Sup. Ct. Ala.	
Penn. St. 188	878	1881; 12 Rep. 484	143
Empress Engineering Co., in re,		Eureka v. Bailey Co., 11 Wall.	
L. R. 16 Ch. D. 125	784, 811	488	128
Empson's case, L. R. 9 Eq. 597		European R. R. v. Poor, 59 Me.	
	185, 207	277	408
Encking v. Simmons, 28 Wis. 272	106	Evans v. Bell, 6 Dana, 479	427
Ender v. Scott, 11 Ill. 35	224	v. Bremridge, 2 Kay & J.	
Endres v. Lloyd, 56 Ga. 547	141	174	831
Enfield Bridge Co. v. R. R., 17		v. Collins, 5 Q. B. 805	
Conn. 40	1063		214, 240, 259
England v. Davidson, 11 A. & E.		v. Edmonds, 13 C. B. 777	
856	502		217, 241
v. Downs, 2 Beav. 522	399	v. Ellis, 5 Denio, 640	427
v. Marsden, L. R. 1 C.		v. Foreman, 60 Mo. 449	288
P. 529	7, 756, 762, 763	v. Herring, 3 Dutcher, 243	340
Englander v. Rogers, 41 Cal. 420	983	v. Hooper, L. R. 1 Q. B.	
Engle v. Campbell, 42 Mich. 565	630	D. 45	784
English v. Blundell, 8 C. & P. 332	827	v. Horan, 52 Md. 602	
v. R. R., 32 Conn. 240	1064		107, 111, 117 a
Eng. and For. Credit Co. v. Ard-		v. Jones, 5 M. & W. 77	450
uin, L. R. 5 H. L. 64	4, 5	v. Judkins, 4 Camp. 156	977
Enix v. Hays, 48 Iowa, 86	1021	v. Keeland, 9 Ala. 42	256
Enthoven v. Hoyle, 13 C. B. 373	687	v. Montgomery, 50 Iowa,	
Enys v. Donnithorne, 2 Burr. 1190		325	290
	820, 832	v. Myers, 25 Penn. St. 114	632
Ephraims v. Murdock, 7 Blackf.		v. Negley, 13 S. & R. 218	
10	794		362, 467
Epis. Char. Soc. v. Epis. Church,		v. Nicholson, 45 L. J. C.	
1 Pick. 372	141	P. D. 111, n; 32 L. T. N.	
Equit. Life Ass. Soc. v. Poe, 53		S. 778	20
Md. 28	427	v. Peacock, 16 Ves. 512	169
Erie R. R. v. Express Co., 6		v. Powis, 1 Exch. 601	
Vroom, 240	328, 433		852, 935, 996, 1003
Erlanger v. Phosphate Co., L. R.		v. Prosser, 3 T. R. 186	1019
3 Ap. Ca. 1218	131, 163, 255 a	v. Sanders, 8 Port. 497	655
Ernst v. Bartle, 1 Johns. Ca. 319	825	v. Scott, 89 Penn. St. 136	872
v. Cummings, 55 Cal. 179	558	v. Trenton, 4 Zab. 764	413, 502
Erskine v. Erskine, 13 N. H. 436	884	v. Waln, 71 Penn. St. 69	
v. Townsend, 2 Mass. 493	972		180, 709, 910
Erwin v. Blake, 8 Pet. 18	944	Eve v. Moseley, 2 Strobb. 203	997
v. Parham, 12 How. 197		Evelyn v. Chichester, 3 Burr.	
	166, 516, 520	1717	49
v. Saunders, 1 Cow. 249	513	Everett v. Collins, 2 Camp. 515	953
Eskridge v. Glover, 5 St. & Port.		Everhart v. Puckett, 73 Ind. 409	
264	13, 15		338, 394
Esposito v. Bowden, 7 E. & B. 763		v. Searle, 71 Penn. St.	
	305, 367, 473, 476	256	378
Esron v. Nicholas, 1 De G. & S.		Everitt v. Everitt, L. R. 10 Eq.	
118	74	405	161

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Evershed v. R. R., L. R. 2 Q. B.		Fanning v. Russell, 94 Ill. 386	35
D. 254	149, 738	Fanshor v. Stout, 1 South. 319	405
Everson v. Carpenter, 17 Wend.		Fant v. Cathcart, 8 Ala. 725	37
419	37, 62, 66	v. Miller, 17 Grat. 47	872
Evertson v. Tappen, 5 Johns. Ch.		Farebrother v. Ansley, 1 Camp.	
497	726	343	724, 765
Ewing v. Ewing, 2 Leigh, 337	531	Fareira v. Gabell, 89 Penn. St. 89	453
v. Osbaldiston, 2 M. & Cr.		Farewell v. Dickenson, 6 B. & C.	
53	349	251	318
v. Smith, 3 Desauss. 417	77	Fargo v. Goodspeed, 87 Ill. 290	91
Ewins v. Gordon, 49 N. H. 444	3, 523	Faribault v. Sater, 13 Minn. 223	259
Exall v. Partridge, 8 T. R. 308		Farley v. Cleveland, 4 Cow. 432	865
	7, 756, 759, 762	v. Parker, 6 Oreg. 105	107
Exchange Bank v. Rice, 107 Mass.		v. Thompson, 15 Mass. 18	1032
37	507, 528,	Farmer v. Farmer, 1 H. L. C. 724	161
	728, 784, 794	v. Russell, 1 B. & P. 296	
v. Russell, 50 Mo.			357, 725
531	204, 205,	Farmers, etc. Bk. v. Bank, 16	
	208, 210	N. Y. 125	
Express Co. v. R. R., 99 U. S. 191	141		133, 141
Eyre v. Potter, 15 How. 42	165, 516	v. Dearing, 91	
Eystra v. Capelle, 61 Mo. 578	683	U. S. 29	
Ezell v. English, 6 Port. 311	793		129, 469
		v. Douglass, 11	
		Sme. & Mar.	
		469	376
		v. Groves, 12	
		How. 51	290
		v. Kercheval, 2	
		Mich. 504	570 a
		v. Maxwell, 32	
		N. Y. 579	138
		v. R. R., 72 N.	
		Y. 188	793
		v. Rathbone,	
		26 Vt. 19	831
		v. Smith, 6	
		Wheat. 131	1067
		v. Watson, 32	
		N. Y. 583	138
		Farmers' Ins. Co. v. Bair, 82	
		Penn. St. 33	695, 698
		Farmington Acad. v. Allen, 14	
		Mass. 172	528, 708
		Farnam v. Brooks, 9 Pick. 212	
			110, 214, 245
		Farnsworth v. Boardman, 131	
		Mass. 115	540, 661
		v. Hemmer, 1 Allen,	
		494	709
		v. Richardson, 35	
		Me. 267	400
		Farnum v. Burnett, 21 N. J. Eq.	
		87	495
		Farquhar v. Morris, 7 T. R. 124	881
		Farr v. Sumner, 12 Vt. 28	48
		Farrall v. Hilditch, 5 C. B. N. S.	
		840	554
		Farrar v. Alston, 1 Dev. 69	243
		v. Barton, 5 Mass. 395	344

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Farrar v. Bridges, 5 Hump. 411	677	Felton v. Dickinson, 10 Mass. 287	
v. Hutchinson, 9 A. & E.			507, 784
641	940	v. Gregory, 130 Mass. 176	150
Farrel v. Lloyd, 69 Penn. St. 239	249	v. Reid, 7 Jones, N. C. 269	512
Farrer v. Close, L. R., 4 Q. B.		Fenderson v. Owen, 54 Me. 372	
602	440		206, 634
v. Nightingal, 2 Esp. 639	190	Fenelon v. Hogoboom, 31 Wis. 172	91
Farrington v. Barr, 36 N. H. 86	682	Fennell v. Ridler, 5 B. & C. 406	
Farris v. Ware, 60 Me. 482			365, 382, 385, 387
	282, 285, 730	Fenton v. Browne, 14 Ves. 144	245
Farrow v. Wilson, L. R., 4 C. P.		v. Clarke, 11 Vt. 557	
744	322, 323, 718		323, 714, 717
Farwell v. Rogers, 4 Cush. 460	895	v. Ham, 35 Mo. 409	376
Fasset v. Brown, Peake, 23	681	v. Lord, 128 Mass. 466	721
Fatman v. Leet, 41 Ind. 133	945	v. White, 1 South. 100	66
Fauble v. Davis, 48 Iowa, 462	815	Feret v. Hill, 15 C. B. 207	
Faucett v. Currier, 115 Mass. 20	267		257, 343, 348
Faulder v. Silk, 3 Camp. 126	107, 123	Ferguson v. Bell, 17 Mo. 347	63
Faulkner v. Faulkner, 73 Mo. 327	814	v. Carrington, 9 B. & C.	
v. Hebard, 26 Vt. 452	10, 13	59	258, 288, 290
v. Lowe, 2 Ex. 595		v. Galt, 23 Up. Can. C.	
	301, 547, 588, 805	P. 66	594
Faull v. Tinsman, 36 Penn. St.		v. Haas, 64 N. C. 772	208
108	842	v. Harwood, 7 Cranch,	
Faunce v. Burke, 16 Penn. St.		408	659
469	594, 612	v. Wilson, L. R. 2 Ch.	
Favenc v. Bennett, 11 East, 36	943	77	130
Favor v. Philbrick, 7 N. H. 326	364	Fergusson v. Fyffe, 8 Cl. & F. 121	463
Fawcett v. Freshwater, 31 Oh. St.		v. Norman, 5 Bing. N.	
637	499	C. 76 ; 6 Scott, 794	365
Faxon v. Durant, 9 Met. 339	496	Ferris v. Adams, 23 Vt. 136	407
v. Mansfield, 2 Mass. 147	717	v. Irving, 28 Cal. 645	323
Fay v. Holloran, 35 Barb. 295	318	Ferson v. Sanger, 1 W. & M. 138	
v. Noble, 12 Cush. 1	138		131, 196, 259, 270, 753
v. Oatley, 6 Wis. 42	483	Fertilizer Co. v. Hyde Park, 97	
v. Oliver, 20 Vt. 118	750	U. S. 659	135
v. Smith, 1 Allen, 477	700	Fesenmayer v. Adcock, 16 M. &	
Fayle v. Bird, 6 B. & C. 531	990	W. 449	776
Feamster v. Withrow, 12 W. Va.		Fessard v. Mugnier, 18 C. B. N.	
611	955	S. 286	873
Fearn v. Cochrane, 4 C. B. 274	954	Fessenden v. Willey, 2 Allen, 67	1068
Fears v. Brooks, 12 Ga. 195	77	Festerman v. Parker, 10 Ired.	
Feather v. R., 6 B. & S. 257	135	474	647
Featherstonhaugh v. Clay Co., L.		Fetrow v. Wiseman, 40 Ind. 148	
R. 1 Eq. 318	135		36, 41, 57, 63, 66
Feay v. De Camp, 15 S. & R. 227		Field v. Brackett, 56 Me. 121	320
	285, 742	v. Crawford, 6 Gray, 116	784
Federal Ins. Co. v. Robinson, 82		v. Holland, 6 Cranch, 8	
Penn. St. 357	740		924, 929, 933
Feital v. R. R., 109 Mass. 398	382, 388	v. Lelean, 6 H. & N. 617	882
Felch v. Bugbee, 48 Me. 9	845	v. Mayor, 2 Seld. 179	169
v. Taylor, 13 Pick. 133	507	v. Moore, 7 De G. M. & G.	
Felker v. Emerson, 16 Vt. 653	84	691	73
Fellows v. Prentiss, 3 Denio, 512	570	v. Moulson, 2 Wash. C. C.	
v. School Dist., 39 Me. 559		155	6
	738, 740, 754	v. Robins, 8 A. & E. 90	949
Felthouse v. Bindley, 11 C. B. N.		v. Stearns, 42 Vt. 106	291
S. 869	21, 22	v. Weir, 28 Miss. 56	533
Feltmakers Co. v. Davis, 1 B. &		v. Woodmanoy, 10 Cush.	
P. 98	506	427	662

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Filby v. Miller, 25 Penn. St.	264	Fisher v. Milliken, 8 Barr,	111 318
	288, 290	v. Mowbray, 8 East,	330 36
Filmer v. Gott, 4 Br. P. C.	230	v. N. Y. Com. Pleas,	18
	540, 683	Wend. 608	257
Filson v. Himes, 5 Barr,	452	v. Otis, 3 Chand.	83 462
	339, 403, 404, 407,	509	v. Richardson, Cro. Jac.
Financial Corporation's Claim, L.		47	532
R. 3 Ch.	355 846	v. Seltzer, 23 Penn. St.	
Finch's case, 6 Coke,	39 a 662	308	6, 25 b
Finch v. Brook, 1 Bing. N. C.	253 983	v. Shattuck, 17 Pick.	252
v. Mansfield, 97 Mass.	89		146, 150
	345, 877	v. Shelver, 53 Wis.	498 91
v. Miller, 5 C. B.	428 977, 979	v. Wilmoth, 68 Ind.	449
Findlay v. Hall, 12 Oh. St.	610 463		785, 786
Findon v. Parker, 11 M. & W.	675	v. Wilson, 18 Ind.	133 289
	421, 422, 425	v. Worrall, 5 W. & S.	478 245
Finlay v. King, 3 Pet.	346 601	Fishmongers' Co. v. Robertson,	5
Finley v. Quirk, 9 Minn.	194 382	M. & G.	131 553
Finn v. Donahue, 35 Conn.	216	Fisk v. Brackett, 32 Vt.	798 841
	382, 383, 384, 389	Fiske v. Bailey, 51 N. Y.	150 83
Finnel v. Brew, 81 Penn. St.	362 740	v. Eldredge, 12 Gray,	474 810 a
Finnell v. Nesbit, 16 B. Mon.	351 842	Fissington v. Hutchinson, 15 L.	
Fire Ass. v. Williamson, 26 Penn.		T. N. S.	390 486
St. 196	338 a	Fitch v. Carpenter, 43 Barb.	40 637
Firemen's Ins. Co. v. McMillan,		v. Chapman, 10 Conn.	8 278
29 Ala.	147 677, 679	v. Fitch, 8 Pick.	480 169
Firestone v. Firestone, 49 Ala.		v. Jones, 5 E. & R.	238 451
128	378	v. Peckham, 16 Vt.	150 719
First Nat. Bk. v. Bank, 60 N. Y.		v. Remer, 1 Biss.	337 463
278	141	v. Snedaker, 38 N. Y.	248
v. Crocker, 111			24, 507
Mass.	168 877	v. Sutton, 5 East,	230
v. Franklin, 20			504, 935, 997
Kan.	264 698	Fitchburg v. Lunenburg,	102
v. Hall, 101 U. S.		Mass.	358 658
43	4	Fitchburg R. R. v. Gage, 12 Gray,	
v. Watkins, 21		393	442 a
Mich.	483 149	Fithian v. Monks, 43 Mo.	502
v. Yocum, 11 Neb.			507, 728
	328 246, 285	Fitt v. Cassanet, 4 M. & G.	898
Firth v. R. R., L. R. 20 Eq.	100 593		604, 919
Fischer v. Kamala Naicker, 8		Fitts v. Hall, 9 N. H.	441 48 a, 52, 53
Moo. Ind. Ap.	170 422	Fitz v. Bynum, 55 Cal.	459 208, 282
Fish v. Cleland, 33 Ill.	238 264	v. Comey, 118 Mass.	100 202
v. Kempton, 7 C. B.	687 945	Fitzgerald v. Allen, 128 Mass.	232 714
Fisher v. Apollinaris Co., L. R.		v. Barker, 70 Mo.	685
10 Ch.	297 486		785, 786 a
v. Bridges, 3 E. & B.	642,	v. Chapman, L. R. 1 Ch.	
rev'g 2 E. & B.	118	D.	563 80
	346, 347, 351, 373	v. Peck, 4 Litt.	125 199
v. Budlong, 10 R. I.	525	v. Reed, 9 S. & M.	94
	250, 251, 259		100, 106, 107, 114, 118, 120
v. Ellis, 3 Pick.	322 528	Fitzhugh v. Wilcox, 12 Barb.	235
v. Fallows, 5 Esp.	171 768		106, 123
v. Fisher, 98 Mass.	303 776	Fitzsimmons v. Baum, 44 Penn.	
v. Kinaston, 18 Vt.	489 763	St. 32	467
v. Lewis, 69 Mo.	629 376	v. Joslin, 21 Vt.	129
v. May, 2 Bibb,	448 533		237, 254, 270
v. Mellen, 103 Mass.	503	Fivaz v. Nicholls, 2 C. B.	501
	214, 241, 243		336, 340, 483

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Flack v. Garland, 8 Md. 188	999	Flynn v. Ins. Co., 115 Mass. 449	789
Flagg v. Dryden, 7 Pick. 52	870, 891	v. Messenger, Minn. S. C.	
v. Mann, 2 Sumn. 486	3	1881; 9 N. W. Rep. 759	84
v. Millbury, 4 Cush. 243	388	Fogg v. Griffin, 2 Allen, 1	133, 270
Flake v. Nuse, 51 Tex. 98	977	v. Sawyer, 9 N. H. 365	960
Flanagan v. Meyer, 41 Ala. 132	382	v. Willcutt; 1 Cush. 300	231
v. R. R., L. R. 7 Eq. 116	161	Foggart v. Blackweller, 4 Ired.	
Flanagin v. Hambleton, 54 Md.		238	260
222	855	Foley v. Cowgill, 5 Blackf. 18	259
Flannagan v. Kilcome, 58 N. H.		v. Fletcher, 3 H. & N. 769	1036
—; 25 Alb. L. J. 317	533	v. Mason, 6 Md. 37	979, 986
Flannery v. Rohrmayer, 46 Conn.		v. Tabor, 2 F. & F. 663	256
558	604	Foll's App., 91 Penn. St. 434	378, 408
Fleckner v. Bank of U. S., 8		Follansbee v. Adams, 86 Ill. 13	602
Wheat. 338	128	Follett v. Rose, 3 McL. 332	165
Fleet v. Perrins, L. R. 4 Q. B.		Folliott v. Ogden, 1 H. Black, 123	841
500	77 a	Follit v. Koetzow, 2 E. & E. 730	
Fleming v. Potter, 7 Watts, 380		525, 532	
575, 606, 875		Foltz v. State, 33 Ind. 215	382
v. Ramsey, 46 Penn. St.		Fonda v. Sage, 46 Barb. 109	677
252	533	Fonville v. Casey, 1 Mur. N. C.	
Flemyng v. Hector, 2 M. & W.		389	298
172	945	Foord v. Noll, 2 Dow. N. S. 617	977
Fletcher, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 6 C. D.		Foos v. Sabin, 84 Ill. 564	212
350	1012	Foot v. Bentley, 44 N. Y. 166	938
v. Cole, 23 Vt. 114	558	v. Tewksbury, 2 Vt. 97	118
v. Drath, 66 Mo. 126	230	Foot v. Burnet, 10 Ohio, 317	899
v. Dyche, 2 T. R. 32	825	v. Emerson, 10 Vt. 338	340, 354
v. Grover, 11 N. H. 368		Forbes v. Appleton, 5 Cush. 115	520
765, 835		v. McDonald, 54 Cal. 98	408
v. Ins. Co., 18 Pick. 419	256	v. Watt, L. R. 2 Sc. & D.	
v. Jackson, 23 Vt. 581	765	214	206
v. Krell, 42 L. J. Q. B.		Ford v. Adams, 2 Barb. 349	858
55	251	v. Beech, 11 Q. B. 852	
v. Marshall, 15 M. & W.		631, 638, 670, 956, 1033, 1036	
755	724, 725	v. Burchard, 130 Mass. 424	1029
v. Sondes, 3 Bing. 501	360	v. Cotesworth, L. R. 4 Q. B.	
Flight v. Bolland, 4 Russ. 298	32	127	306, 311, 319, 882
v. Booth, 1 Bing. N. C. 370		v. Harrington, 16 N. Y. 285	
186, 214, 217		161, 167, 353	
v. Clarke, 13 M. & W. 155	348	v. James, 2 Abb. N. Y. Ap.	
v. Reed, 1 H. & C. 703	513	159	679
Flinn v. Barber, 59 Ala. 446	742	v. Joyce, 78 N. Y. 618	208
Flint v. Craig, 59 Barb. 319	696	v. Olden, L. R. 3 Eq. 461	167
v. Woodin, 9 Hare, 618	267	v. Phillips, 1 Pick. 202	63
Flint, <i>etc.</i> R. R. v. Dewey, 14		v. Tiley, 6 B. & C. 325	885 a
Mich. 477	408	v. White, 16 Beav. 120	842
Flockton v. Hall, 14 Q. B. 380	996	v. Williams, 21 How. 287	811
Flower v. Buller, L. R. 15 Ch. D.		Fordley's case, 1 Leon. 68	621
665	78	Fore v. McKenzie, 58 Ala. 115	230
v. Flower, 20 W. R. 231	395	Foreman v. Ahl, 55 Penn. St. 325	383
v. Shaw, 2 C. & K. 703	185	v. Bigelow, 4 Cliff. C. C.	
Flowery Mining Co. v. Mining Co.,		508	282, 283
16 Nev. 302	681	v. Hardwick, 10 Ala. 316	450
Floyd v. Browne, 1 Rawle, 121	7	Forest v. Stewart, 14 Oh. St. 246	570 a
v. Day, 3 Mass. 403	723	Formby v. Pryor, 15 Ga. 258	403
v. Goodwin, 8 Yerg. 484	511	Forniquet v. Forstall, 34 Miss. 87	285
Flureau v. Thornhill, 2 W. Black.		Forrest v. R. R., 4 De G. F. & J.	
1078	899	126	139
Fly v. Brooks, 64 Ind. 50	190	Forster v. Fuller, 6 Mass. 58	505, 810 a

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Forster v. Taylor, 3 Camp. 49	7	Foster v. Thurston, 11 Cush. 322	
v. Taylor, 5 B. & Ad. 887			343, 344
	363, 365	v. Trull, 12 Johns. 456	1000
Forsyth v. Day, 46 Me. 176	185	Foulk v. Eckert, 61 Ill. 318	290
v. Ganson, 5 Wend. 558	757	Fountaine v. R. R., L. R. 5 Eq.	
v. Hastings, 25 Vt. 646			316
	56, 717	Fowell v. Tranter, 3 H. & C. 458	638
v. Oil Co., 53 Penn. St.		Fowke v. Bowie, 4 Har. & J. 566	924
168	282	Fowkes v. Ins. Co., 3 B. & S. 917	670
Forsythe v. State, 6 Ohio, 19	370	Fowle v. Coe, 63 Me. 245	678
Fort Plain, etc. Co. v. Smith, 30		v. Freeman, 9 Ves. 351	645
N. Y. 44	1066	Fowler v. Adams, 13 Wis. 458	208
Forward v. Pittard, 1 T. R. 27	327	v. Armour, 24 Ala. 194	716
Fosdick v. Van Hulan, 21 Mich.		v. Bott, 6 Mass. 63	318
567	985	v. Butterly, 78 N. Y. 68	91
Foshay v. Ferguson, 5 Hill, 154		v. Chichester, 26 Oh. St. 9	83
	144, 149, 737	v. Fay, 62 Ill. 375	786 a
Foss v. Hurbottle, 2 Hare Ch. 461		v. Fowler, 4 De G. & J.	
	139, 251, 282		250
v. Lowell Bank, 111 Mass.		v. Hollins, L. R. 7 Q. B.	
285	841		616
v. Nutting, 14 Gray, 484	841	v. Merrill, 11 How. U. S.	
Foster v. Allanson, 2 T. R. 479	777		375
v. Bank, 17 Mass. 479	320, 576	v. Poling, 6 Barb. 165	230
v. Caldwell, 18 Vt. 176	259	v. Scully, 72 Penn. St. 456	
v. Charles, 6 Bing. 396; 7			356, 365
Bing. 105	236, 237, 238,	v. Shearer, 7 Mass. 14	89, 740
	239, 241, 243, 246	Fox's Estate, 1 Leg. Gaz. (Phil.)	
v. Clark, 19 Pick. 329	405		53
v. Cockerell, 3 Cl. & F. 456	845	Fox v. Abel, 2 Conn. 541	391
v. Dawberg, 6 Exch. 839		v. Bishop of Chester, 6 Bing.	
	938, 1032		1
v. Drew, 39 Vt. 51	977	v. Cash, 11 Penn. St. 207	352
v. Essex Bank, 17 Mass.		v. Davis, 113 Mass. 255	90, 395
479	141	v. Iron Co., 17 Leg. Int. 149	797
v. Green, 7 H. & N. 881	733	v. Kitton, 19 Ill. 519	885
v. Gressett, 29 Ala. 393	282	v. Mackreth, 2 Bro. Ch. 400;	
v. Hooper, 2 Mass. 572	825, 832	1 Wh. & T. L. C. Eq., 4th	
v. Jack, 4 Watts, 334	421, 427	Am. ed. 188	250, 252, 254
v. Ley, 2 Bing. N. C. 269	757	v. Northern Liberties, 3 W.	
v. McGraw, 64 Penn. St.		& S. 107	7
464	803, 924	Foxcroft v. Devonshire, 1 W. Bl.	
v. Mackinnon, L. R. 4 C.			193
P. 704	185, 264,	Foxcroft Academy v. Favor, 4 Me.	
	283, 292, 1050		382
v. Mansfield, 3 Met. 412	679	Foxell v. Fletcher, 59 How. Pr. 88	899
v. Means, 1 Speer's Eq. 569	113	Foxworth v. Bullock, 44 Miss. 457	262
v. Metts, 55 Miss. 77	533	Fraker v. Little, 24 Kan. 598	752
v. Newbrough, 58 N. Y.		Fraley v. Bispham, 10 Barr, 320	225
481	938	v. Kelly, 67 N. C. 78	513
v. Paulk, 41 Me. 425	953	Frambers v. Risk, 2 Ill. Ap. 499	750
v. Peyser, 9 Cush. 242	250	Frampton v. Frampton, 4 Beav.	
v. Phaley, 35 Vt. 303	505		287
v. Purdy, 5 Met. 442	1032, 1036	France v. White, 6 Bing. N. C.	
v. Redgrave, L. R. 4 Ex.			33
35, n. (8)	70	Francis v. Cockrell, L. R. 5 Q. B.	
v. Roberts, 29 Beav. 467	169		501
v. Rockwell, 104 Mass. 167		v. Edwards, 77 N. C. 271	278
	337, 654	v. Felmit, 4 Dev. & B. 498	42
v. Stewart, 3 M. & S. 191	730	v. Rand, 7 Conn. 221	1021

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Frank's Appeal, 59 Penn. St.	190 537	Freeman v. Curtis, 51 Me.	140 198, 199
Frank v. Frank, 2 Moody & Rob.		v. Hartman, 45 Ill.	57 266, 399
314	123	v. Jeffries, L. R. 4 Ex.	
v. Jenkins, 22 Ohio St.	597 709	189	750, 752
v. O'Neil, 125 Mass.	473 343	v. Otis, 9 Mass.	272 732
v. Welch, 89 Ill.	38 377	v. Perry, 22 Conn.	617 839
Frankford Bank v. Johnson, 24		v. Pope, L. R. 5 Ch.	538 377
Me. 490	130	v. Read, 4 B. & S.	174 895
Franklin v. Clafin, 49 Md.	24 377	v. Venner, 120 Mass.	424 243
v. Long, 7 Gill & J.	407 298	Freese v. Crary, 29 Ind.	524 134
v. Miller, 4 A. & E.	599 558, 748	Freeth v. Burr, L. R. 9 C. P.	208 575, 580, 606
v. Osgood, 2 Johns. Ch.		French v. French, 126 Mass.	360 463
1; 14 Johns.	527 165, 166, 518	v. French, 8 Ohio,	214 118, 119
Franklin Bank v. Cooper, 36 Me.		v. Griffin, 3 C. E. Green,	
179, 221		279	261
570 a, 923, 927		v. Shoemaker, 14 Wal.	
v. Lynch, 52 Md.		314	144, 149
270	27	v. Vining, 102 Mass.	132 222, 249
v. Steward, 37 Me.		v. Watson, 2 Wils.	74 981
519	130, 133	Frenzel v. Miller, 37 Ind.	1 241, 251
Franklin Co. v. Savings Inst., 68		Freshfield's Trust, in re, L. R.	11 845
Me. 43	137, 142	Ch. D. 198	
Franklin Ins. Co. v. Brock, 57 Penn.		Frevall v. Fitch, 5 Whart.	325 186, 199
St. 74	338 a, 670	Freyman v. Knecht, 78 Penn. St.	
v. Updegraff, 43		141	189, 282
Penn. St. 350	670	Fridge v. State, 3 Gill & J.	103 36
Franks v. Duchess de Pienne, 2		Friend v. Harrison, 2 C. & P.	584 373
Esp. 587	76	Friesmuth v. Ins. Co., 10 Cush.	
Frants v. Brown, 17 S. & R.	287 797	587	338 a
Franz v. R. R., 55 Iowa,	107 720	Frisbee v. Hoffnagle, 11 Johns.	50 520
Frary v. Rooth, 37 Vt.	78 77	Frisbie v. Larned, 21 Wend.	450 504, 853, 954, 1003
Fraser v. Davie, 11 S. C.	56 677	Frith v. Lawrence, 1 Paige,	434 12
v. Hill, 1 Macq.	392 344	v. Sprague, 14 Mass,	455 761, 765, 835
v. Thompson, 1 Giff.	49 377	Fritsch v. Heislen, 40 Mo.	555 382
Frazer v. Boss, 66 Ind.	1 956	Frontier Bank v. Morse, 22 Me.	
v. Bunn, 8 C. & P.	704 932	88	960
v. D'Invilliers, 2 Barr,	200 744	Frost v. Belmont, 6 Allen,	152 402, 430
v. Frazer, 2 Del. Ch.	260 109	v. Gage, 1 Allen,	262 788, 794
v. Hatton, 2 C. B. N. S.		v. Ins. Co., 5 Denio,	154 248
512	503	v. Johnson, 8 Ohio,	393 999, 1003
Frazier v. Massey, 14 Ind.	382 37	v. Knight, L. R. 7 Ex.	111 13, 603, 604, 885
v. Monroe, 72 Penn. St.		v. Lowry, 15 Ohio,	200 285
166	661	v. Spaulding, 19 Pick.	445 633
v. Thompson, 2 Watts &		v. Willis, 13 Vt.	202 88
S. 235	338	Fry v. Evans, 8 Wend.	530 1026
Frear v. Evertson, 20 Johns.	142 1038	Frye v. Lockwood, 4 Cow.	454 755
Fredericks v. Fasnacht, 30 La.		Fryer v. Patrick, 42 Md.	51 206
An. Pt. I. 117	5	Fugure v. Mutual Soc., 46 Vt.	
Freed v. Brown, 55 Ind.	310 102, 107, 117 a	362	506, 728
Freeholders v. Thomas, 5 C. E.		Fulford v. Johnson, 15 Ala.	385 955
Green, 39	955	Fullam v. Valentine, 11 Pick.	156 1036
Freeland v. Burt, 1 T. R.	701 641		
Freeman v. Birch, 1 Nev. & M.	420 792		
v. Boston, 5 Metc.	56 24		
v. Boynton, 7 Mass.	483 199, 532		
v. Cooke, 2 Ex.	654 202 a		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Fullarton v. Mittelholzer, 6 Q. B.		Galena v. Corwith, 48 Ill.	423 135
1022	337	Galena R. R. v. Barrett, 95 Ill.	467 165
Fuller v. Abrahams, 3 B. & B.	116 268	Gallagher v. Frorer, 4 Ill. App.	330 722
v. Bean, 34 N. H.	290 3, 593	v. Roberts, 2 Wash.	C. C. 191 958
v. Brown, 11 Met.	440 322, 714	v. Waring, 9 Ward.	20 221, 904, 905
v. Dame, 18 Pick.	472	Gallatian v. Cunningham, 8 Cow.	361 161, 254
362, 376, 402, 414,	430	Galpin v. Wilson, 40 Iowa,	90 103, 158
v. Davis, 1 Gray,	612 321, 329	Galt v. Jackson, 9 Ga.	151 340
v. Hodgdon, 25 Me.	243 243	v. Swain, 9 Grat.	633 528
v. Little, 7 N. H.	535 742, 983	Galwin v. Collins, 128 Mass.	525 995
v. Nav. Co., 21 Conn.	557 129	Gamber v. Gamber, 18 Penn. St.	363 79, 91
v. Pelton, 16 Ohio,	457 971	Gammage v. Moore, 42 Tex.	170 198, 205
v. Steiglitz, 27 Oh. St.	355 844	Gammell v. Gunby, 52 Ga.	504 224, 906
Fulmer v. Seitz, 68 Penn. St.	237 700	Gammon v. Abrams, 53 Wis.	323 616
Fulton v. Hood, 34 Penn. St.	365 153, 244	Gangwere's Estate, 14 Penn. St.	417 123, 388
v. Loftis, 63 N. C.	393 152, 243	Gant v. Shelton, 3 B. Mon.	420 245
v. Whitney, 66 N. Y.	548 378	Garber v. Armentrout, 32 Grat.	235 742
Fulton Ins. Co. v. Baldwin,	37 786	Garbutt v. Bank, 22 Wis.	384 258
N. Y. 648	786	Gardener v. Ennor, 35 Beav.	549 427
Fulwiler v. Jackson, 1 Phila.	145 468	Gardiner v. Gray, 4 Camp.	144 187, 223, 224, 904, 915
Funk v. Hough, 29 Ill.	145 523	v. Morse, 25 Me.	140 443
Furman v. Parke, 1 Zab.	310 24	Gardner, ex parte, 4 Y. & C. Ex.	503 890
Furnas v. Durgin, 119 Mass.	500 786 a	v. Allen, 6 Ala.	187 1023
Furnivall v. Coombes, 5 M. & Gr.	736 598, 673	v. Butler, 30 N. J. Eq.	702 378
Furness v. Meek, 27 L. J. Ex.	34 554	v. Gardner, 7 Paige,	112 77
Furnold v. Bank, 44 Mo.	336 765	v. Lane, 9 Allen,	492 ; 12 Allen, 39 186, 187, 188
Furtado v. Rogers, 3 B. & P.	191 350, 477	v. Maxey, 9 B. Mon.	90 483
Fusting v. Sullivan, 51 Md.	489 1021	v. Walsh, 25 L. T.	168 ; 5 E. & B. 83 696, 698, 700
G.		Garey v. Hignutt, 32 Md.	552 831
Gabarron v. Kreeft, L. R.	10 Ex. 274 878	Garforth v. Fearon, 1 H. Bl.	327 407
Gable v. Parry, 13 Penn. St.	181 1030	Garland v. Bank, 9 Mass.	408 755
Gabriel v. Dresser, 15 C. B.	622 999	v. Lane, 46 N. H.	245 877
Gaffney v. Hayden, 110 Mass,	137 34, 46	v. Pamplin, 32 Grat.	305 77
Gage v. Gage, 36 Mich.	229 677	v. Spencer, 46 Me.	528 233
v. Lewis, 68 Ill.	604 257	Garner v. Garner, 1 Desaus.	437 199
Gaines v. Allen, 58 Mo.	537 161, 378	Garnhart v. Finney, 40 Mo.	449 615
v. Trans. Co., 28 Ohio St.	418 438	Garnons v. Knight, 5 B. & C.	671 23, 107 a, 677, 697
Gainor v. Gainor, 26 Iowa,	337 399	Garnsey v. Allen, 27 Me.	366 758, 768
Gainsford v. Blachford, 7 Price,	544 262	v. Rogers, 47 N. Y.	233 785
Galbraith v. Galbraith, 6 Watts,	112 902	Garrard, ex parte, L. R.	5 C. D. 61 638
Galbreath v. Moore, 2 Watts,	86 723	v. Haddan, 67 Penn. St.	82 700
Gale v. Gale, L. R. 6 C. D.	144 537, 790		
v. Kalamazoo, 23 Mich.	344 431		
v. Leckie, 2 Stark,	96 372		
v. Reed, 8 East,	80 437		
v. Tappan, 12 N. H.	145 323		
v. Williamson, 8 M. & W.	405 540, 683		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Garrard v. Woolner, 8 Bing.	258	Gebb v. Rose, 40 Md.	387
	856, 1005	Gebhard v. R. R., 17 Blatch.	416
Garrett v. Gonter, 42 Penn. St.		Geddes v. Pennington, 5 Dow.	159
143	185	Geddis v. Hawk, 10 S. & R.	33
v. Handley, 4 B. & C.	664	Gee v. Pearse, 2 De G. & Sm.	325
v. R. R., 78 Penn. St.	465	Geer v. Archer, 2 Barb.	420
	528, 595	v. Richmond, 6 Vt.	76
Garretty v. Brazell, 34 Iowa,	100	Geere v. Mare, 2 H. & C.	339
Garrigues v. Harris, 17 Penn. St.		Geiger v. Cook, 3 W. & S.	266
344	239	Geipel v. Smith, L. R. 7 Q. B.	404
Garrison v. Nute, 87 Ill.	215		305, 324, 476
v. Paul, 1 Penn Sup. Ct.		Geiser v. Kershner, 4 Gill & J.	305
380	1017		954, 997
Garrow v. Brown, 1 Wins. (N. C.)		Gell v. Burgess, 7 C. B.	16
No. 2 Eq.	46	Geller v. Seixas, 4 Abb. Pr.	103
Garton v. R. R., 28 L. J. Exch.		Gelpcke v. Blake, 15 Iowa,	387
169	149, 738	v. Dubuque, 1 Wall.	175,
Gartside v. Isherwood, 1 Bro. C.		220, 221	143, 338, 367
C. 558	103	Genesee Bank v. Patchin Bk., 3	
Garver v. Miller, 16 Oh. St.	527	Kern.	309
Garvin v. Lowry, 15 Miss.	24		141
v. Williams, 50 Mo.	206	George v. Clagett, 7 T. R.	359
Garwood v. Eldridge, 1 Green Ch.		v. George, 47 N. H.	27
145	198		382, 385
Gas Light Co. v. Turner, 5 Bing.		v. Harris, 4 N. H.	533
N. C. 666; 6 Bing. N. C.	324	v. Skivington, L. R.	5
Gaskell v. King, 11 East,	165	Exch. 1	228
Gasque v. Small, 2 Str. Eq.	72	Gere v. Clarke, 6 Hill (N. Y.)	
	166, 518	350	832
Gass's App., 73 Penn. St.	39	Gerhard v. Bates, 2 E. & B.	476
Gass v. Stinson, 3 Sumn.	99	German v. Chapman, L. R. 7 C.	
Gassett v. Andover, 21 Vt.	342	D. 271	667
Gaston v. Drake, 14 Nev.	175	German Ins. Co. v. Davis, 131	
Gates v. Bliss, 43 Vt.	299	Mass. 316	207
	282, 289, 730, 919	Germ. Luth. Ch. v. Heise, 44 Md.	
v. Goodloe, 101 U. S.	612	453	933
	305, 319	German Mining Co., in re, 4 De G.	
v. Green, 4 Paige,	355	M. & G.	19
v. Ins. Co., 1 Selden,	469		138
v. Renfroe, 7 La. An.	569	Germania Ins. Co. v. R. R., 72 N.	
Gath v. Lees, 3 H. & C.	558	Y. 90	196
Gatling v. Newell, 9 Ind.	572	Gerrish v. Norris, 9 Cush.	167
	284, 285	v. Towne, 3 Gray,	82
Gatty v. Field, 9 Q. B.	431	Gerst v. Jones, 32 Grat.	518
Gaul v. Willis, 26 Penn. St.	259	Getchell v. Chase, 37 N. H.	106
Gaullagher v. Caldwell, 22 Penn.			730, 919
St. 300	845	Getty v. Devlin, 54 N. Y.	403
Gault v. Brown, 48 N. H.	183		161, 251, 282
v. Saffin, 44 Penn. St.	307	v. Donnelly, 9 Hun,	603
Gaultney v. Nolan, 33 Miss.	569		251, 282
Gauntlett v. Carter, 17 Beav.	586	Getzler v. Saroni, 18 Ill.	511
Gavinzel v. Crump, 22 Wall.	308	Gheen v. Johnson, 90 Penn. St.	
Gay v. Alter, 102 U. S.	79	38	453
v. Kingsley, 11 Allen,	345	Gibbins v. Asylum Dist., 11 Beav.	
Gaylord v. Soragen, 32 Vt.	110	1	4, 645
Gaylord Man. Co. v. Allen,	53	Gibbon v. Coggon, 2 Camp.	188
N. Y. 515	223, 562, 903, 905	v. Young, 8 Taunt.	254
Gazley v. Price, 16 Johns.	267	Gibbons v. Caunt, 4 Ves.	840
	558, 581	v. Gouverneur, 1 Denio,	
Geach v. Ingall, 14 M. & W.	95	170	452
	256	v. Vouillon, 8 C. B.	483
		Gibbs v. Cannon, 9 S. & R.	198
			570 a, 954

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Gibbs v. Cunningham, 4 Md. Ch.		Gillet v. Stanley, 1 Hill (N. Y.)	
322	1013	121	31
v. Harding, L. R. 5 Ch. 336		Gillett v. Mawman, 1 Taunt. 137	714
90, 91, 395		Gilliam v. Brown, 43 Miss. 641	725
v. Howard, 2 N. H. 296	1009	Gilliat v. Gilliat, L. R. 9 Eq. 60	267
v. Linabury, 22 Mich. 479	264	Gillis v. Hall, 2 Brewst. 342	
v. Merrill, 3 Taunt. 307	31, 56		430, 431, 436
v. Smith, 115 Mass. 592	443	Gillman v. Rives, 10 Pet. 298	833
v. Southam, 5 B. & Ad. 911	577	Gilman v. Dwight, 13 Gray, 356	433
Giblin v. McMullen, L. R. 2 P. C.		v. Hall, 11 Vt. 510	898
317	320	v. Healy, 55 Me. 120	947
Gibney v. Marchay, 34 N. Y. 301		v. Moore, 14 Vt. 457	620, 990
	774, 779	v. Peck, 11 Vt. 516	960
Gibson, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 4 Ch. 662	862	v. Van Slyck, 7 Cow. 469	1017
v. Cooke, 20 Pick. 15		v. Veazie, 24 Me. 202	528, 595
506, 507, 836, 840, 855		Gilmer v. Gilmer, 42 Ala. 9	301
v. Cranage, 39 Mich. 49	593	Gilmore v. Aiken, 118 Mass. 94	436
v. D'Este, 2 Y. & C. 542		v. Green, 14 Bush, 772	
	217, 236		498, 512
v. East India Co., 5 Bing.		v. Holt, 4 Pick. 258	983, 990
N. C. 262	128, 130	v. Lewis, 12 Oh. 281	
v. Gibson, 15 Mass. 112	1036		24, 405, 413, 502
v. Jeyes, 6 Ves. 266	163	v. Wilbur, 12 Pick. 120	730
v. Minet, R. & M. 68	728	Gilpins v. Consequa, Pet. C. C. 85	
v. Partee, 2 Dev. & Bat.			311, 315, 547
L. 530	679	Gilson v. Bingham, 43 Vt. 410	562
v. Pelkie, 37 Mich. 380	298	v. Collins, 66 Ill. 136	724
v. Renne, 19 Wend. 389	710	v. Hutchinson, 120 Mass.	
v. Soper, 6 Gray, 279		27	399
48, 107, 111, 114, 116		v. Spear, 38 Vt. 311	52
v. Stearns, 3 N. H. 185	464	v. Stewart, 7 Watts, 100	776
v. Winter, 5 B. & Ad. 96	821	Gingrich v. People, 34 Ill. 448	321
Giddey v. Altman, 27 Mich. 206	576	Girard Ins. Co. v. Marr, 46 Penn.	
Giddings v. Seevers, 24 Md. 363	862	St. 504	954
Gifford, <i>ex parte</i> , 6 Ves. 805	831	v. Stewart, 86	
v. Carvill, 29 Cal. 589	260	Penn. St. 89	
v. Whittaker, 6 Q. B.			786 a, 853
249	997	Girarday v. Richardson, 1 Esp. 13	374
Gil v. Williams, 12 La. An. 219	402	Gisaf v. Neval, 81 Penn. St. 354	
Gilbert v. Danforth, 2 Seld. 585	585		352, 373
v. Ins. Co., 23 Wend. 43		Gist v. Frazier, 2 Litt. 118	144
	677, 679	v. Smith, 78 Ky. 367	742
Gilchrist v. Comfort, 34 N. Y. 235	972	Gittings v. Mayhew, 6 Md. 113	528
v. Hilliard, 53 Vt. 592	230	Gjerness v. Mathews, 27 Min. 320	558
Giles v. Ackles, 9 Barr, 147	523, 532	Glacius v. Black, 50 N. Y. 145 ;	
v. Bourne, 6 M. & G. 73	893	67 N. Y. 563	869
v. Edwards, 7 T. R. 181		Glaholm v. Hays, 2 M. & G. 257	
	312, 520, 746, 748		555, 659
v. Giles, 9 Q. B. 164	606	Glascott v. Day, 5 Esp. 48	977, 983
v. Hart, 2 Salk. 622	973	Glass v. Hulbert, 102 Mass. 24	
Gilkeson v. Smith, 5 W. Va. 128	976		202, 208
Gill v. Brown, 12 Johns. 385	856	Glass Co. v. Morey, 108 Mass. 570	631
v. Kaufman, 16 Kan. 571	220, 916	Glasscock v. Minor, 11 Mo. 655	241
v. R. R., L. R. 8 Q. B. 186	438	Glassfurd v. Laing, 1 Camp. 149	464
v. Vogler, 52 Md. 663	717	Glazebrook v. Woodrow, 8 T. R.	
Gillespie v. Bailey, 12 W. Va. 70	60	366	558, 580, 899
v. Edmonston, 11 Humph.		Gleason v. Dyke, 22 Pick. 390	763
553	13, 18	v. Pinney, 5 Cow. 152	599
v. Moon, 2 Johns. Ch.		Gledstane's case, L. R. 1 Ch. 538	
585	208		844, 1019

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Glen v. Whitaker, 51 Barb.	451 877	Gompertz v. Bartlett, 2 E. & B.	849 566, 744
Glenn v. Glenn, 47 Ala.	204 77	v. Denton, 1 C. & M.	207 263, 610, 730
v. Smith, 2 Gill & J.	493 955	v. Pooley, 4 Drew,	448 1013
v. Statler, 42 Iowa,	107 196, 198	Gonzales v. Hukil, 49 Ala.	260 89
Glidden v. Strupler, 52 Penn. St.	400 78, 89	Gooch's case, L. R. 8 Ch.	266 35, 40
Globe Bk. v. Small, 25 Me.	366 570 a	Gooch v. Bryant, 13 Me.	386 698
Globe Ins. Co. v. Boyle, 21 Oh.	St. 119 269, 275	Good, ex parte, L. R. 5 C. D.	46 938
Globe Works v. Wright, 106 Mass.	207 647	v. Cheeseman, 2 B. & Ad.	328 852, 853, 856, 996, 1005
Glossop v. Colman, 1 Stark.	21 818	v. Elliott, 3 T. R.	693 449
Gloucester Bank v. Salem Bank,	17 Mass. 33 131. 744, 960	v. Good, 9 Watts,	567 ; 3 495
Glover v. Drury Lane, 2 Chitty,	117 76	W. & S.	472 181, 198
v. McGilvray, 63 Ala.	508 205	v. Herr, 7 W. & S.	253 341
v. Robbins, 49 Ala.	219 700	Goodall v. Lowndes, 6 Q. B.	464 341
v. Townsend, 30 Ga.	90 262	Goode v. Harrison, 5 B. & Ald.	147 40
Glyn v. Baker, 13 East,	509 734	v. Hawkins, 2 Dev. Eq.	393 443
v. Dock Co., L. R. 5 Q. B.	D. 129 793	Goodell v. Fairbrother, 12 R. I.	233 608
Gochenauer v. Cooper, 8 S. & R.	187 842	v. Harrington, 3 T. & C.	345 123
Goddard v. Cox, 2 Strange,	1194 924	v. Wentworth, 20 Me.	322 761, 765
v. Hodges, 1 C. & M.	33 929	Goodin v. Armstrong, 19 Ohio,	44 778
v. O'Brien, L. R. 9 Q. B.	D. 37 ; 46 L. T. N. S.	Goodisson v. Nunn, 4 T. R.	761 558, 580
306 935, 997, 1001		Goodland v. Blewith, 1 Camp.	477 982
v. Snow, 1 Russ. Ch.	485 266, 399	Goodman v. Eastman, 4 N. H.	455 247, 695
Godfrey v. Harben, L. R. 13 Ch.	D. 216 77	v. Pocock, 15 Q. B.	576 716
v. Terry, 97 U. S.	171 1062, 1067	v. Simonds, 20 How.	343 453, 795
Godson v. Sanctuary, 4 B. & Ad.	255 30	v. Winter, 64 Ala.	410 74
Godts v. Rose, 17 C. B.	229 882	Goodrich v. Laffin, 1 Pick.	57 558
Godwin v. Francis, L. R. 5 C. P.	295 27, 1046	v. Nickols, 2 Root,	498 624
Goetter v. Pickett, 61 Ala.	387 196	v. Reynolds, 31 Ill.	490 138
Gold Mining Co. v. Bank, 96 U. S.	640 140	v. Stanley, 24 Conn.	613 996, 1006
Goldham v. Edwards, 16 C. B.	437 ; 18 C. B. 389 360	v. Tracy, 43 Vt.	314 960
Golding v. Merchant, 43 Ala.	705 945	Goodridge v. Ross, 6 Metc.	487 56
Goldrich v. Ryan, 3 E. D. Smith,	324 222	Goodsell v. Myers, 3 Wend.	479 36, 37, 56, 63, 66
Goldsborough v. Cradie, 28 Md.	477 24	Goodspeed v. Bank, 22 Conn.	530 131
Goldshede v. Cottrell, 2 M. & W.	20 955	v. Fuller, 46 Me.	141 233
v. Swan, 1 Ex.	154 654	Goodwin v. Clark, 65 Me.	280 338, 511
Goldsmith v. Guild, 10 Allen,	239 887	v. Cremer, 18 Q. B.	757 935, 967
Goltra v. Sanasack, 53 Ill.	456 198, 199	v. Cunningham, 12 Mass.	193 844
Gomersall, in re, L. R. 1 Ch. D.	137 379	v. Follett, 25 Vt.	386 504, 997
Gompers v. Rochester, 56 Penn.	St. 194 430, 433	v. Holbrook, 4 Wend.	377 551, 843, 871, 992
		v. Roberts, L. R. 10 Ex.	76, 337 ; 1 Ap. Ca. 476 796, 797
		v. Screw Co., 34 N. H.	378 128
		v. Ward, 6 Baxt.	107 677

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Goodyear v. Weymouth, 1 H. & R. 67; 35 L. J. C. P. 12	594	Goundie v. Northampton Water Co., 7 Barr, 233	142
Gookin v. Graham, 5 Hump. 480	230	Gove v. Vining, 7 Met. 212	573
Goosey v. Goosey, 48 Miss. 210	654	Gover's case, L. R. 20 Eq. 114; 1 Ch. D. 182	255 a
Gordner v. Heffley, 49 Penn. St. 163	719	Governors, etc. v. Knotts, L. R. 4 Ap. Ca. 324	28
Gordon v. Ellis, 7 M. & G. 607	946, 982	Govett v. Richmond, 7 Sim. 1	811
v. Ellis, 2 C. B. 821	1028	Govier v. Hancock, 6 T. R. 603	87
v. Gordon, 3 Swanst. 400	217, 256 a	Goward v. Waters, 98 Mass. 596	9, 540
v. Gordon, 56 N. H. 170	501	Gower v. Andrew, Sup. Ct. Cal. 1881; 13 Rep. 43	435
v. Hobart, 2 Story, 243	926, 934	v. Sterner, 2 Whart. 75	205
v. Howdon, 12 Cl. & F. 237	349	v. Von Dedalzen, 3 Bing. N. C. 717	911
v. Parmelee, 2 Allen, 212	245	Gowing v. Knowles, 118 Mass. 232	4
v. Potter, 17 Vt. 348	64	Grabill v. Moyer, 45 Penn. St. 530	91
v. Price, 10 Ired. 385	955	Gradwohl v. Harris, 29 Cal. 150	778
v. R. R., 52 N. H. 596	25	Grady's case, 1 De Gex, J. & S. 488	132, 141
v. Strange, 1 Exch. 477	961, 986	Grady v. Crook, 2 Abb. N. C. 53	24
v. Tax Court, 3 How. 133	1063	Graeme v. Wroughton, 11 Exch. 146	351, 360, 407
Gore v. Gibson, 13 M. & W. 623	109, 119, 120, 121	Graff v. Foster, 67 Mo. 512	915
Gore Ins. Co. v. Samo, 2 Can. S. C. 411	338 a	v. R. R., 31 Penn. St. 489	528
Gorman v. Bellamy, 82 N. C. 496	712	Graffenstein v. Epstein, 23 Kan. 443	260
v. Lowell, 117 Mass. 65	388	Grafton v. R. R., 8 Ex. 699	594
Gorrissen v. Perrin, 2 C. B. N. S. 681	563	Gragg v. Martin, 12 Allen, 498	376, 377
Gorst v. Lowndes, 11 Sim. 434	895	Graham, ex parte, 5 De G. M. & G. 356	831
Goshorn v. Snodgrass, 17 W. Va. 717	239	v. Allsop, 3 Ex. 186	762
Goslin v. Hodson, 24 Vt. 140	708	v. Chapman, 12 C. B. 85	739
Gosman v. Cruger, 69 N. Y. 87	77	v. Graham, 1 Ves. Jr. 272	679
Goss v. Nugent, 5 B. & Ad. 58	382, 499, 661, 856, 865, 870	v. Graham, 34 Penn. St. 475	588
v. Turner, 21 Vt. 437	903	v. Hamilton, 5 Ired. L. 428	651
v. Whitney, 24 Vt. 187; 27 Vt. 272	382	v. Johnson, L. R. 8 Eq. 36	535, 842, 846
Gossler v. Sugar Refinery, 103 Mass. 331	189, 223	v. Little, 3 Jones Eq. 152	161
Gott v. Dinsmore, 111 Mass. 45	438	v. Merrill, 5 Cold. 622	473
Gottsman v. Ins. Co., 56 Penn. St. 210	338 a	v. Oliver, 3 Beav. 124	230
Gotwalt v. Neal, 25 Md. 434	454	v. Pancoast, 30 Penn. St. 89	158, 166
Goudy v. Gebhart, 1 Oh. St. 262	235	v. Robinson, 2 T. R. 282	765
Gough v. Findon, 7 Ex. 48	778	v. Swearingin, 9 Yerg. 276	318
v. Manning, 26 Md. 347	397	v. Tate, 1 M. & S. 610	740
v. Staats, 13 Wend. 549	953	Grain's case, L. R. 1 C. D. 315	864
Gould v. Bank, 21 Hun, 293; 86 N. Y. 75	285, 977	Grain v. Shipman, 45 Conn. 572	91
v. Banks, 8 Wend. 562	980	Gram v. Cadwell, 5 Cow. 489	821, 1038
v. Day, 94 U. S. 405	107 a, 677	Grammar School v. Burt, 11 Vt. 632	1063
v. Fuller, 18 Me. 364	765		
v. Gould, 6 Wend. 263	814, 816, 818		
v. Ins. Co., 47 Me. 403	338 a		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Grand Lodge v. Waddill, 36 Ala. 313	142	Gray v. Harris, 107 Mass. 492	308
Grandy v. Ferebee, 68 N. C. 356	278	v. Hinton, 2 McCrary, 167	899
v. McCleese, 2 Jones, L. 142	558, 581	v. Hook, 4 N. Y. 449	407
Granger v. Granger, 6 Ohio, 35	1022	v. James, 128 Mass. 110	16
v. Hathaway, 17 Mich. 500	755	v. Lewis, L. R. 8 Ch. 1035	139
Grangers' Ins. Co. v. Brown, 57 Miss. 308	463	v. Mathias, 5 Ves, 286	373
Grangiac v. Arden, 10 Johns. 293	35	v. Packer, 4 W. & S. 17	421
Granite R. R. v. Bacon, 15 Pick. 239	700	v. Pearson, L. R. 5 C. P. 568	784, 819
Grant v. Exchange Co., 5 M. & S. 439	1029	v. R. R., 11 Hun, 70	593
v. Fletcher, 5 B. & C. 436	4	v. Seigler, 2 Strobb. 117	486
v. Grant, 56 Me. 573	264	v. White, 108 Mass. 228	964
v. Hamilton, 3 McL. 100	449	Great Luxembourg R. R. v. Mag-nay, 25 Beav. 586	290, 408
v. Johnson, 1 Seld. 247	580	Great Northern R. R. v. Witham, L. R. 9 C. P. 16	13, 14, 16, 524
v. Law, 29 Wis. 99	233	Great West. R. R. v. Rous, L. R. 4 H. L. 650	638
v. McLester, 8 Ga. 553	407	v. Sutton, L. R. 4 H. L. 226	738
v. Tallman, 20 N. Y. 191	899	Great West. Tel. Co., in re, 5 Biss. 363	138
v. Thompson, 4 Conn. 203	100, 103, 114, 245	Greele v. Parker, 5 Wend. 414	25 a
v. Vaughan, 3 Burr. 1516	776	Green, in re, 7 Biss. 338; 15 N. B. Reg. 198	453
Grape Sugar Co. v. Small, 40 Md. 395	141	v. Attenborough, 3 H. & C. 468	704
Grasselli v. Lowden, 11 Ohio St. 349	433, 434, 533	v. Baverstock, 14 C. B. N. S. 204	267
Gratz v. Cohen, 11 How. U. S. 1	158	v. Birch, 2 Ill. Ap. 528	597
v. Redd, 4 B. Monr. 178	199	v. Collins, 3 Cliff. 494	343, 361
Gravely v. Barnard, L. R. 18 Eq. 518	433, 437, 517	v. Davies, 4 B. & C. 235	778
Graver's Appeal, 50 Penn. St. 189	726	v. Gilbert, 21 Wis. 395	322
Graver v. Scott, 80 Penn. St. 88	899	v. Green, 69 N. Y. 553	47
Graves v. Bank, 10 Bush, 23	241, 570 a	v. Hern, 2 Pen. & W. 167	405
v. Berdan, 26 N. Y. 498	318	v. Price, 13 M. & W. 695	338
v. Dudley, 20 N. Y. 76	939	v. Richardson, 4 Col. 584	785
v. Graves, 3 Curt. Ec. 239	265	v. Shurtliff, 19 Vt. 592	973
v. Graves, 29 N. H. 129	682	v. Sperrey, 16 Vt. 390	53, 84
v. Ins. Co., 2 Cranch, 419	208	v. Winter, 1 Johns. Ch. 26	726
v. Key, 3 B. & Ad. 313	938, 952	v. Wynn, L. R. 7 Eq. 28	831
v. Legg, 9 Exch. 709; 11 Exch. 642; 2 H. & N. 210	553, 568, 709	v. Yarnall, 6 Mo. 326	677
v. Shulman, 59 Ala. 406	954	Greenawalt, ex parte, 2 Clark, 1	161, 399
Gray v. Angier, 62 Ga. 596	972	Greene v. Bateman, 2 Wood & M. 359	4, 190
v. Blanchard, 8 Pick. 284	604	v. Darling, 5 Mason, 201	844, 1009, 1011, 1024
v. Bowls, 1 Dev. & B. 437	768	v. Dingley, 24 Me. 131	882
v. Brackenridge, 2 Pen. & W. 75	467	v. Godfrey, 44 Me. 25	383
v. Clark, 11 Vt. 583	662	Greeneville, etc. R. R. v. Johnson, 8 Baxt. 332	662
v. Emmons, 7 Mich. 533	161	Greenfield's Estate, 14 Penn. St. 489; 24 Penn. St. 232	161, 185
v. Fowler, 1 H. Bl. 462	466	Greenfield Bank v. Crafts, 4 Allen, 447	185
v. Fowler, L. R. 8 Ex. 249	288	Greenman v. Cohee, 61 Ind. 201	421, 929
v. Gardner, 17 Mass. 188	551, 609	Greenough v. Balch, 7 Greenl. 461	345

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Greenough v. Wiggington, 2 Greene (Iowa) 435	77	Grim v. Byrd, 32 Grat. 293	214, 254, 259
Greenvault v. Davis, 4 Hill, 643	230	v. School District, 57 Penn. St. 433	149
Greenwade v. Greenwade, 3 Dana, 495	463	Grimoldby v. Wells, L. R. 10 C. P. 391	916
Greenwood v. Barns, 50 Mo. 52	943	Grindell v. Godmond, 5 A. & E. 755	92
v. Bishop of London, 5 Taunt. 727	338	Grinnell v. Spink, 128 Mass. 25	938, 997
v. Greenwood, 2 De G. J. & S. 28	256 a	v. Tel. Co., 113 Mass. 299	438, 572
v. Greenwood, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 954	202	Grissell, in re, L. R. 12 Ch. D. 484	77
v. R. R., S. C. U. S. 1882; 25 Alb. L. J. 448	1063, 1065	v. Robinson, 3 Bing. N. C. 10; 3 Scott, 329	756, 757
Greeves v. McAllister, 2 Binn. 591	512, 516	Griswold v. Haven, 25 N. Y. 595	6, 270
Gregory v. Harman, 3 C. & P. 205	727	v. Waddington, 15 Johns. 57; 16 Johns. 438	94, 364, 473
v. Leigh, 33 Texas, 813	810 a	Grizewood v. Blane, 11 C. B. 526	453
v. Mighell, 18 Ves. 328	60	Groff v. Rohrer, 35 Md. 327	202
v. Pierce, 4 Met. Mass. 478	76, 81	Grose v. Hennessey, 13 Allen, 389	231
v. Schoenell, 55 Ind. 101	291	Gross v. Kierski, 41 Cal. 111	231
v. Wendell, 39 Mich. 337	340, 453	v. Leber, 47 Penn. St. 520	181, 199, 206
v. Williams, 3 Mer. 582	784	Grossman v. Wohlleben, 90 Ill. 537	499
v. Winston, 23 Grat. 102	266	Grosvenor v. Magill, 37 Ill. 239	885
Gregson v. Ruck, 4 Q. B. 737	4	v. Sherratt, 28 Beav. 659	162
Grell v. Levy, 16 C. B. N. S. 73	360, 361, 427	Grotenkemper v. Achtermayer, 11 Bush, 222	6, 25 b
Gremare v. Valon, 2 Camp. 144	364	Grove v. Donaldson, 15 Penn. St. 128	502, 603
Gresham v. Morrow, 40 Ga. 487	853, 1003	v. Hodges, 55 Penn. St. 504	239, 253, 257
Gresty v. Gibson, 4 H. & C. 28; L. R. 1 Ex. 112	784, 788, 804, 816, 817, 1037	v. McCalla, 21 Penn. St. 44	415
Grew v. Burditt, 9 Pick. 265	1022	Grover v. Grover, 24 Pick. 261	496
Grey v. Cooper, 3 Doug. 65	32	Groves v. McGuire, Ky. Ct. App. 1881	512
v. Ellison, 1 Giff. 438	805	v. Perkins, 6 Sim. 576	533
v. Friar, 4 H. L. Cas. 565	595	Grubb v. Brooke, 47 Penn. St. 485	467
Grieve v. Annin, 1 Halst. 461	990	Grumley v. Webb, 44 Mo. 444	268
Griffin v. Banks, 37 N. Y. 621	90, 395	Grussy v. Schneider, 50 How. Pr. 134	986
v. Chubb, 7 Tex. 603	258	Grymes v. Blofield, Cro. Eliz. 541	1008
v. Rembert, 2 S. C. 410	25 a	v. Sanders, 93 U. S. 55	208, 284
v. Weatherby, L. R. 3 Q. B. 753	728	Guard v. Whitesides, 13 Ill. 7	1032, 1033, 1036
Griffinhoofe v. Daubuz, 5 E. & B. 746	763	Gudgen v. Besset, 6 E. & B. 986	679, 697
Griffith v. Grogan, 12 Cal. 317	956	Guenther v. Birkicht, 22 Mo. 439	719
v. Ingledew, 6 S. & R. 429	792	Guerand v. Dandele, 32 Md. 561	431, 432, 433
v. Sitgreaves, 90 Penn. St. 161	146	Guernsey v. Wood, 130 Mass. 503	1068
v. Spratley, 1 Cox, 383	144, 165	Guerreiro v. Peile, 3 B. & Ald. 616	963
v. Wells, 3 Denio, 226	365		
Griffiths v. Owen, 13 M. & W. 58	956, 1004		
Griggs v. Landis, 21 N. J. Eq. 494	887		
Grim v. Bonnell, 78 Penn. St. 152	278		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Guild v. Belcher, 119 Mass.	257 . 863	Hackley v. Headley, 45 Mich.	569 149
v. Butler, 127 Mass.	386	Haden v. Coleman, 73 N. Y.	567 604
	953, 1003	v. Ware, 15 Ala.	149 198, 199
v. Guild, 15 Pick.	129 719	Hadley v. Baxendale, 9 Exch.	341 1046
v. Parker, 43 N. J. L.	430 408	v. Clarke, 8 T. R.	259 305, 309
Guillander v. Howell, 35 N. Y.	657 843, 845	v. Imp. Co., 13 Oh. St.	502 250, 251
Guion v. Doherty, 43 Miss.	538 956	v. Ins. Co., 55 N. H.	110 604
Gulick v. Ward, 5 Halst.	87 402	v. Latimer, 3 Yerg.	537 158
Gullett v. Lumberton, 1 Eng.	(Ark.) 109 33	Hager v. Catlin, 18 Hun,	448 403
Gully v. Bishop of Exeter, 10 B.	& C. 584 531	Hagerstown Bank v. Loudon Sav-	ings Soc., 3 Grant (Penn.) 135 141
v. Gully, 1 Hawks, 20	673	Haggerty v. McCanna, 25 N. J.	Eq. 48 196
Gumm v. Tyrie, 4 B. & S. 680; 6	B. & S. 298 652, 805	Hagood v. Harley, 8 Rich.	325 679
Gump's Appeal, 65 Penn. St.	476 202	Hague v. French, 3 B. & P.	173 893
Gunby v. Sluter, 44 Md.	237 241, 242	Haigh v. Brooks, 10 A. & E.	309 534, 1000
Gunderson v. Richardson, 56 Iowa,	56 382	v. Kaye, L. R. 7 Ch.	469 264
Gunn's case, L. R. 3 Ch.	40 17	Haight v. Moore, 37 N. Y. Sup.	Ct. 161 427
Gunn v. Bolckow, L. R. 10 Ch.	491 955	Haines v. Haines, 6 Md.	435 505, 517
Gunnell v. Cockerill, 84 Ill.	319 677	v. Lewis, 54 Iowa,	301 404
Gunnison v. Bancroft, 11 Vt.	490 657	v. Tucker, 50 N. H.	307 580
Gunter v. Williams, 40 Ala.	561 77	Hair v. Little, 28 Ala.	236 683
Guptill v. Damon, 42 Me.	271 647	Hakes v. Hotchkiss, 23 Vt.	231 532
Gurney v. Behrend, 3 E. & B.	622 793	Haldane v. Johnson, 8 Exch.	689 869, 873
v. Womersley, 4 E. & B.	133 189, 520, 566, 744	Haldeman v. Simonton, 55 Iowa,	144 431
Gurris v. Kopera, 3 H. & C.	694 784	Hale v. Brown, 11 Ala.	87 104
Guthing v. Lynn, 2 B. & Ad.	232 1, 3	v. Finch, 104 U. S.	261 554
Guthrie's App., 92 Penn. St.	269 924	v. Gerrish, 8 N. H.	374 56, 63
Guthrie v. Morris, 22 Ark.	411 36, 66	v. Huse, 10 Gray,	99 760
v. Murphy, 4 Watts,	80 70	v. Ins. Co., 12 Fed. Rep.	359 258
v. Pugsley, 12 Johns.	126 899	v. Philbrick, 47 Iowa,	217 242
v. White, 1 Dall.	268 836	v. Rawson, 4 C. B. N. S.	85 563
Guy v. McLean, 1 Dev.	46 682	v. Rice, 124 Mass.	292 494, 513
Guyard v. Sutton, 3 C. B.	153 77 a	v. Russ, 1 Greenl.	334 696
Gwillim v. Daniell, 2 C. M. & R.	61 902	Hales v. Freeman, 1 B. & B.	391 757
Gwinn v. Simes, 61 Mo.	335 382	v. R R., 4 B. & S.	66 882
v. Whitaker, 1 Har. & J.	754 924	Haley v. Ins. Co., 12 Gray,	545 250, 256
Gwynn v. Hamilton, 29 Ala.	233 198	v. Philadelphia, 68 Penn.	St. 45 1061
Gwynne v. Heaton, 1 Bro. C. C.	1 518	Halford v. Kymer, 10 B. & C.	724 456
H.		Halfpenny v. Bell, 82 Penn. St.	128 1029
H. v. W., 3 K. & J.	382 395	Halifax Union v. Wheelwright,	L. R. 10 Ex. 183 185
Haage's App., 17 Penn. St.	181 1021	Hall, ex parte, 1 Deacon,	171 513
Haase v. Mitchell, 58 Ind.	213 285, 730	Hall's App., 60 Penn. St.	458 435
Habberton v. Wakefield, 4 Camp.	58 740	Hall v. Bainbridge, 1 Man. & G.	42 819
Hacker v. Perkins, 5 Whart.	95 855	v. Bainbridge, 12 Q. B.	699 677, 681
Hackett v. Chatterton, 13 R. I.	— 353, 360	v. Bank, 53 Md.	120 667
v. Martin, 8 Greenl.	77 1038	v. Cazenove, 4 East,	477 301, 678, 893
v. Ottawa, 99 U. S.	86 141, 143		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hall v. Chandless, 4 Bing. 123	697	Halloran v. Whitcomb, 43 Vt. 306	
v. Corcoran, 107 Mass. 251			837, 844
	383, 388	Hallowell, etc. Bk. v. Howard, 13	
v. Costello, 48 N. H. 176	383, 637	Mass. 235	984
v. Dyson, 17 Q. B. 785	511	Hallows v. Fernie, L. R. 3 Eq. 520	243
v. Erwin, 66 N. Y. 649	239	Halsey v. Blood, 29 Penn. St. 319	939
v. Flockton, 16 Q. B. 1039		v. Reed, 9 Paige, 446	786, 853
	996, 1003	v. Whitney, 4 Mason, 206	
v. Fuller, 5 B. & C. 750	763		821, 950
v. Fullerton, 69 Ill. 448	284	Ham v. Greve, 34 Ind. 18	570 a
v. Gayler, 37 Conn. 550	877	v. Smith, 87 Penn. St. 63	
v. Gilmore, 40 Me. 578	732		410, 508
v. Hall, 43 Ala. 488	205	v. Van Orden, 84 N. Y. 257	496
v. Hall, 52 Tex. 294	91	Hamaker v. Eberley, 2 Binn. 506	
v. Hallett, 1 Cox, 134	426		532, 533, 654, 1033
v. Heydon, 41 Ala. 242	511	Hamblin v. Dinneford, 2 Edw.	
v. Hinks, 21 Md. 406	291		529
v. Huntoon, 17 Vt. 244	405, 784	Hambly v. Trott, 1 Cowp. 371	731
v. Ins. Co., 6 Gray, 185	256	Hambright v. Stover, 31 Ga. 300	224
v. Jackson Co., 5 Ill. App.		Hamelin v. Bruck, 9 Q. B. 306	705
609	754	Hamet v. Dundass, 4 Barr, 178	
v. Johnson, 41 Mich. 286	246		165, 166, 518
v. Leigh, 8 Cranch, 50		Hamill v. Foute, 51 Md. 419	716
	815, 816, 826	Hamilton's case, L. R. 8 Ch. 548	26
v. Levy, L. R. 10 C. P. 154	1039	Hamilton v. Benbury, 2 Hayw.	
v. Marston, 17 Mass. 575			385
	732, 857, 794	v. Conyers, 28 Ga. 276	208
v. Mayhew, 15 Md. 551	902	v. Cutts, 4 Mass. 349	230
v. Naylor, 6 Duer, 71	258	v. Eller, 11 Ired. 276	990
v. Palmer, 3 Hare, 532	373	v. Grainger, 5 H. & N.	
v. Reed, 2 Barb. Ch. 500	198	40	341, 374
v. Robinson, 8 Ired. 56	765	v. Hamilton, 10 R. I.	
v. Rupley, 10 Barr, 231		538	123
	585, 605, 708, 712, 716	v. Hamilton, 2 Rich.	
v. Smith, 5 How. U. S. 96	768	Eq. 355	443
v. Smith, 10 Iowa, 45	999	v. Hamilton, 89 Ill. 349	
v. Thompson, 1 Sm. & M.			91, 394
443	242, 245, 259, 261	v. Hector, L. R. 6 Ch.	
v. Timmons, 2 Rich. Eq. 120	74	701; 13 Eq. 511	400
v. Unger, 2 Abb. U. S. 507	110	v. Ins. Co., 5 Barr, 339	18
v. Vanness, 49 Penn. St. 457	169	v. Johnson, L. R. 5 Q.	
v. Virginia, 91 Ill. 535	528	D. 263	151 a
v. Warren, 9 Ves. 605	98, 109	v. Lomax, 26 Barb. 615	73
v. Warwick, 2 Am. L. J.		v. Russell, 1 Cranch,	
186	1001	309	377
v. Weir, 1 Allen, 261	69	v. Smith, S. C. Iowa,	
v. Williams, 13 Minn. 260	633	1881	399
v. Wisconsin, 103 U. S. 5	1071	v. Watson, 12 Cl. & F.	
v. Wright, E. B. & E. 746;		109	254
29 L. J. Q. B. 43	323, 324, 547	Hamilton College v. Stewart, 2	
Halleck v. State, 11 Ohio, 400	778	Denio, 403; 1 Comst. 581	528
Hallenbeck v. Dewitt, 2 Johns.		Hamley's case, L. R. 5 C. D. 705	26
404	158, 185	Hamlin v. R. R., 1 H. & N. 408	25
Hallett v. Oakes, 1 Cush. 296		v. Stevenson, 4 Dana, 597	30
	101, 106, 121	Hammatt v. Emerson, 27 Me. 308	
v. Wylie, 3 Johns. 44	318		244, 260, 270, 748
Halley v. Troester, 72 Mo. 73	103	Hammersley v. De Biel, 12 Cl. &	
Halliday v. Doggett, 6 Pick. 359		F. 45	216, 258, 525
	814, 818	Hammett v. Brown, 60 Ala. 498	
Hallock v. Ins. Co., 2 Dutch, 268	13, 18		576, 596, 885 a

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hammond v. Allen, 2 Sumn. 387;		Harding v. Handy, 11 Wheat. 103	
11 Peters, 63	230, 298		159, 165
v. Buckmaster, 22 Vt.		v. Tift, 75 N. Y. 461	927, 929
375	919	v. Wheaton, 2 Mason, 378	103
v. Hopping, 13 Wend.		v. Wormley, 8 Baxt. 578	927
505	470	Hardingham v. Allen, 5 C. B. 793	979
v. Ins. Co., 10 Gray,		Hardman v. Booth, 1 H. & C. 803	
306	897	183, 283, 292, 734	
v. Organ Co., 92 U. S.		Hardy v. Ins. Co., 4 Allen, 217	256
724	436	v. Merriweather, 14 Ind.	
v. Pennock, 61 N. Y.		203	138
145	284, 285, 286	v. Munroe, 127 Mass. 64	617
v. R. R., 15 S. C. 10	616	v. Waters, 38 Me. 450	36, 37, 39
Hampden v. Walsh, L. R. 1 Q. B.		Hare v. R. R., 2 Johns. & H. 80	442 a
D. 189	354, 449, 451	Hargous v. Stone, 5 N. Y. 73	225
Hampton v. Nicholson, 8 C. E.		Hargrave v. Conroy, 19 N. J. Eq.	
Green, 423	198	281	748
Hanauer v. Bartels, 2 Col. 514	880	v. Dusenbury, 2 Hawks,	
v. Doane, 12 Wall. 342		326	960
	342, 474	v. Smee, 6 Bing. 244	670
v. Woodruff, 15 Wall.		Hargroves v. Cooke, 15 Ga. 321	927
439	473	Harington v. Hoggart, 1 B. & Ad.	
Hancock v. Merriek, 10 Cush. 41	86	377	729
v. Peaty, L. R. 1 P. & D.		Harkinson's App., 78 Penn. St. 196	430
335	113	Harkreader v. Clayton, 56 Miss.	
Hand v. Baynes, 4 Whart. 204	309	383	679
Hands v. Burton, 9 East, 349	963	Harlan v. Harlan, 20 Penn. St.	
v. Slaney, 8 T. R. 578	69	303	516, 517, 712
Haney v. Donnelly, 12 Gray, 361	278	Harlow v. Curtis, 121 Mass. 320	4
Hanington v. Du Chatel, 1 Bro.		Harman v. Hoskins, 56 Miss. 142	377
C. C. 124	407	v. Salmon Falls Co., 35	
Hanks v. McKee, 2 Litt. 227	223	Me. 447	718
v. Naglee, 54 Cal. 51	373	Harmer v. Cornelius, 5 C. B. N.	
Hanna v. Mills, 21 Wend. 90	549	S. 236	718
Hannah v. Fife, 27 Mich. 172	443	v. Killing, 5 Esp. 102	57
Hannan v. Hannan, 123 Mass. 441	540	v. Priestly, 16 Beav. 569	976
v. Oxley, 23 Wis. 519	91	Harmon v. Harmon, 63 Ill. 512	377
Hannay v. Pell, 3 E. D. Smith,		v. Magee, 57 Miss. 410	978
432	1013	Harmony v. Bingham, 1 Duer,	
Hannon v. State, 9 Gill, 440	495	209; 12 N. Y. 99	
Hansard v. Robinson, 7 B. & C. 90	694	149, 150, 311, 318, 547, 738	
Hanson, <i>ex parte</i> , 12 Ves. 346; 18		Harms v. Parsons, 32 Beav. 328	433
Ves. 232	1021	Harner v. Dipple, 31 Oh. St. 72	36
v. Edgerley, 29 N. H.		Harney v. Charles, 45 Mo. 157	198
343	214, 243, 250, 251	v. Owen, 4 Blackf. 337	50
v. Millett, 55 Me. 184		Harnor v. Groves, 15 C. B. 667	748
	494, 496	Harper v. Ampt, 32 Ohio St. 291	1065
v. Shackelton, 4 Dowl.		v. Claxton, 62 Ala. 46	723
48	390	v. Fairley, 53 N. Y. 442	513
Hantz v. Sealy, 6 Binn. 405	722	v. Graham, 20 Ohio, 105	
Harbert's case, 3 Coke, 11 b	765	504, 1001	
Harbin v. Levi, 6 Ala. 399	1022	v. Hampton, 1 Har. & J.	
Harden v. Gordon, 2 Mason, 541	778	622	996
Hardenbrook v. Sherwood, 72 Ind.		Harrell v. De Normandie, 26 Tex.	
403	102	120	199
Hardesty v. Smith, 3 Ind. 39	516	v. Mitchell, 61 Ala. 270	377
Hardey v. Coe, 5 Gill, 189	997	Harrhy v. Wall, 1 B. & Ald. 103	
Hardie v. Grant, 8 C. & P. 512	87	380, 687	
Harding v. Ambler, 3 M. & W. 279	1031	Harriman v. Harriman, 12 Gray,	
v. Davies, 2 C. & P. 77	982, 983	341	504, 935, 997

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Harrington v. Bigelow, 11 Paige,		Harrison v. Fane, 1 M. & G. 550	69
349	340	v. Guest, 6 De G. M. &	
v. Dennie, 13 Mass. 93	321	G. 424; 8 H. L. C. 481	
v. Dock Co., 3 Q. B.		165, 166, 516, 588	
D. 549	376	v. Jaquess, 29 Ind. 208	377
v. Long, 2 M. & K. 590	424	v. Luke, 14 M. & W.	
v. Mayor, 70 N. Y.		139	963
604	902	v. Myer, 92 U. S. 111	319
v. Stratton, 22 Pick.		v. Phillips Acad., 12	
510	748	Mass. 456	377
Harris's case, L. R. 7 Ch. 587	10, 18	v. Stewart, 3 C. E. Green,	
Harris v. Blen, 16 Me. 175	884	451	77
v. Carmody, 131 Mass. 51	151 a	v. Town, 17 Mo. 237	166, 517
v. Carter, 3 E. & B. 559	503	v. Wright, 13 M. & W.	
v. Gamble, L. R. 6 C. D.		816	6
748	1016	v. Young, 9 Ga. 359	1064
v. Harris, 23 Grat. 737	495	Harriss v. Williams, 3 Jones, L.	
v. Harris, 7 Ired. Eq. 111	77	483	325
v. Ins. Co., 64 N. Y. 196	285	Harrod v. Myers, 21 Ark. 592	38
v. Johnston, 3 Cranch, 311	955	Harrow v. Dugan, 6 Dana, 341	833
v. Lee, 1 P. Wms. 482	86, 92	Harrower v. Hutchinson, L. R. 5	
v. Lindsay, 4 Wash. C. C.		Q. B. 584	253
98	862, 949	Harry v. Davey, L. R. 2 Ch. D.	
v. McMurray, 23 Ind. 9	259	721	784
v. Nickerson, L. R. 8 Q. B.		Harshaw v. Dobson, 64 N. C. 384	144
286	10, 25 b, 26	Harshberger v. Alger, 31 Grat. 52	
v. Packwood, 3 Taunt. 264	994	77, 719	
v. Pepperell, L. R. 5 Eq. 1		Harson v. Pike, 16 Ind. 140	24
187, 190, 192		Hart v. Alexander, 2 M. & W.	
v. Pratt, 17 N. Y. 249	878	484	862, 963, 949
v. R. R., L. R. 1 Q. B. D.		v. Deamer, 6 Wend. 497	123
515	4, 22, 572	v. Hammett, 18 Vt. 127	632
v. Reynolds, 7 Q. B. 71	1004	v. Middleton, 2 C. & K. 9	896
v. Roof, 10 Barb. 489	402	v. Miles, 4 C. B. N. S. 371	505
v. Runnels, 12 How. 79		v. Mills, 15 M. & W. 85	
129, 343, 363, 364, 365, 445		7, 190, 712, 898, 916	
v. Simmerman, 81 Ill. 413	945	v. R. R., 7 Ex. 246	139
v. Tel. Co., 9 Phil. 88	791	v. Stephens, 6 Q. B. 937	82
v. Troup, 8 Paige, 423	300	v. Swaine, L. R. 7 C. D. 42	
v. Tumbridge, 83 N. Y. 92		181, 214, 241	
453, 453 a, 453 b, 661		v. Ten Eyck, 2 Johns. Ch.	
v. Tyson, 24 Penn. St. 347		62	576
250, 251, 252, 254		v. Wright, 17 Wend. 267	
v. Venables, L. R. 7 Ex.		222, 224	
235	522, 532	Hartford Ins. Co. v. Davenport, 37	
v. Waite, 51 Vt. 480	905	Mich. 609	604
v. Warner, 13 Wend. 400		v. Gray, 80 Ill.	
765, 766		28	196
v. White, 81 N. Y. 532	452	v. Harmer, 2 Oh.	
Harris Man. Co. v. Marsh, 49 Iowa,		St. 452	256
11	599	v. Olcott, 97 Ill.	
Harrisburg Bank v. Tyler, 3 Watts,		439	532, 837
& S. 373	130	v. Webster, 69	
Harrison v. Bailey, 14 S. C. 334	376	Ill. 392	658
v. Barton, 30 L. J. Ch.		Hartford Ore Co. v. Miller, 41	
213	832	Conn. 112	206
v. Cage, 1 Ld. Ray. 386	606	Hartford, etc. R. R. v. Jackson, 24	
v. Close, 2 Johns. 448	831	Conn. 514	4
v. Colton, 31 Iowa, 16		v. R. R., 3 Robt.	
384, 389		411	442 a

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hartje v. Collins, 46 Penn. St.	268	Hastings v. Ins. Co., 73 N. Y.	141 837
	282, 580	v. Lovering, 2 Pick.	214
Hartley v. Cummings, 5 C. B.	247 437		561, 905
v. Decker, 89 Penn. St.		v. Merriam, 117 Mass.	
470	899, 900	245	107 a
v. Ponsonby, 7 E. & B.		v. O'Donnell, 40 Cal.	148 254
872	503	v. Pepper, 11 Pick.	41 708
v. Rice, 10 East, 22		v. Thorley, 8 C. & P.	
	396, 449, 450	573	977
v. Wharton, 11 A. & E.		v. Whitley, 2 Ex.	611 432
934	63	Hatch v. Bates, 54 Me.	136 495
Hartman v. Ins. Co., 21 Penn. St.		v. Douglas, 48 Conn.	116
466	256		453, 635
Hartness v. Thompson, 5 Johns.		v. Hatch, 9 Ves. Jr.	292
160	83		159, 345, 353
Hartopp v. Hartopp, 21 Beav.	259 157	Hathway v. Addison, 48 Me.	440 141
Hartzell v. Saunders, 49 Mo.	433	v. Brady, 23 Cal.	121 202
	523, 810	v. Haynes, 124 Mass.	
Harvey v. Archbold, 1 Ry. & Moo.		311	793
184; 3 B. & C.	626 463	Hatsall v. Griffith, 2 Cr. & M.	
v. Aston, 1 Atk.	361 397	679	826
v. Harris, 112 Mass.	32	Hatten v. Robinson, 4 Blackf.	
	186, 187, 746	479	723, 756
v. Hunt, 119 Mass.	279 380	Hatton, in re, L. R.	7 Ch. 723 1005
v. Kay, 9 B. & C.	356 807	Hatzfield v. Gulden, 7 Watts,	152
v. Morris, 63 Mo.	475 230		402, 403, 404
v. Mount, 8 Beav.	439 161	Hauenstein v. Lynham, 100 U. S.	
v. Olney, 42 Ill.	336 149, 738	483	93
v. Sullens, 46 Mo.	147 159	Haughton v. Bayley, 9 Ired. L.	
v. Tama Co., 53 Iowa,	228	337	766
	340, 1008	v. Leary, 3 Dev. & B.	
v. Turner, 4 Rawle,	223	21	1019
	722, 724	Haule v. Hemyng, Cro. Jac.	432,
v. Varney, 98 Mass.	118 349	cited 6 M. & W.	454 571
v. Young, Yelv.	20 259	Havelock v. Geddes, 10 East,	555 607
Harvy v. Gibbons, 2 Lev.	161 547	Havemeyer v. Havemeyer, 86 N.	
Harwood v. Knapper, 50 Mo.	456 376	Y. 618; 24 Alb. L. J.	434 251, 282
v. Roberts, 5 Greenl.	441 833	Haven v. Foster, 9 Pick.	112
Haselgrove v. House, L. R. 1 Q.			190, 198, 199, 201
B. 101	1037	Haverhill Ins. Co. v. Newhall,	
Haskell v. Mathews, 37 Me.	541 576	1 Allen, 130	810 a
v. Sevier, 25 Ark.	152 305	Hawes v. Oakland, 104 U. S.	450 139
Haskett v. Wootan, 1 Nott &		v. Smith, 2 Lev.	122 516
McC. 180	449, 452	v. Water Works Co., see	
Haskins v. Warren, 115 Mass.		Hawes v. Oakland.	
514	239	Hawk v. Harman, 5 Binn.	43 83
Haslam v. Sherwood, 10 Bing.	540 523	v. Marion Co., 48 Iowa,	
Hassell v. Long, 2 M. & S.	363 555	472	810 a
Hassenfrats v. Kelly, 13 Johns.		Hawkes v. Pike, 105 Mass.	560 677
466	421	v. R. R., 1 De G. M. & G.	
Hassinger v. Solms, 5 S. & R.	4 756	737; 3 De G. & S.	743
Hassler v. Bitting, 40 Penn. St.	68		137, 307
	154, 168	v. Saunders, Cowp.	289 512
Hastelow v. Jackson, 8 B. & C.	221	Hawkins's Appeal, 32 Penn. St.	
	354, 357, 729	263	157, 167
Hastie v. Couturier, 9 Exch.	102 298	Hawkins v. Berry, 5 Gilm.	36 224
Hastings v. Dickinson, 7 Mass.		v. Hawkins, 50 Cal.	558 264
153	1033	v. Pemberton, 51 N. Y.	
v. Dollarhide, 24 Cal.		198	212, 219, 561, 903
195	60	Hawley v. Beverley, 6 M. & G.	221 759

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hawley v. Cramer, 4 Cow. 717	161	Heaps v. Dunham, 95 Ill. 583	
v. Foote, 19 Wend. 516	1003		152, 486
Hawse v. Crowe, R. & Mood. 414	960	Heard v. Bowers, 23 Pick. 455	885 a
Hay v. Ayling, 16 Q. B. 423	454	v. Lodge, 20 Pick. 53	606
v. Green, 12 Cush. 282	841	v. Wadham, 1 East, 619	581
v. Ins. Co., 77 N. Y. 235		Hearn v. Cullin, 54 Md. 533	809
	206, 208	v. Ins. Co., 4 Cliff. C. C.	
Haycraft v. Creasy, 2 East, 92	1046	192	206
Hayden v. Bradley, 6 Gray, 425		v. Kiehl, 38 Penn. St. 147	
	571, 574		999, 1003
v. Goodnow, 39 Conn.		Heastings v. McGee, 66 Penn. St.	
164	698	384	736
v. Reynolds, 54 Iowa, 157	919	Heath v. Gold Exchange, 7 Ab.	
v. Souger, 56 Ind. 42	24	Pr. (N. S.) 251	416
Haydock v. Haydock, 33 N. J.		v. Mahoney, 14 N. Y. Sup.	
Eq. 494; 34 N. J. Eq.		Ct. 100	52
570	102, 159	v. Page, 48 Penn. St. 130	469
v. Tracy, 3 W. & S. 507	382	v. Pratt, 51 Vt. 238	902
Hayes v. Kelley, 116 Mass. 300	774	v. West, 28 N. H. 101	48, 56
v. Matthews, 63 Ind. 412	810 a	Heathcote v. Crookshanks, 2 T.	
v. Porter, 22 Me. 371	228	R. 24	997
Haygarth v. Wearing, L. R. 12		Heatley v. Finster, 2 Johns. Ch.	
Eq. 320 166, 214, 254, 259, 260, 731		158	347
Hayman's App., 65 Penn. St. 433	268	v. Newton, L. R. 19 Ch.	
Haynes v. Nice, 100 Mass. 327	930	D. 326; 45 L. T. N. S.	
v. Thom, 28 N. H. 386	990	455	267
Hayney v. Coyne, 10 Heis. 339	422	Heaton v. Angier, 7 N. H. 397	856
Haynie v. Miller, 61 Ala. 62	91	Heavenridge v. Mondy, 49 Ind.	
Hays v. Com., 82 Penn. St. 518	1061	434	208
v. Coutcher, 54 Ind. 260	810 a	Hebb's case, L. R. 4 Eq. 9	17, 19
v. Galion Co., 29 Ohio St.		Hebbard v. Haughian, 70 N. Y.	
330	136, 140, 142	54	540
v. Kershow, 1 Sandf. Ch.		Hebdon v. West, 3 B. & S. 579	456
258	495	Heburn v. Warner, 112 Mass. 271	77
v. McClurg, 4 Watts, 452	956	Heckle v. Lurvey, 101 Mass. 344	736
Hayward, ex parte, L. R. 6 Ch.		Heckman v. Swartz, 50 Wis. 267	
546	795		151, 353, 354
v. Barker, 52 Vt. 429		Heckmann v. Pinkney, 81 N. Y.	
	76, 86, 512	211	869
v. Leonard, 7 Pick. 181	714	Hedge v. Drew, 12 Pick. 141	677
Hazard v. Day, 14 Allen, 487	385	v. Lowe, 47 Iowa, 137	431, 433
v. Ins. Co., 1 Sumner, 218	4	Hedges v. R. R., 49 N. Y. 223	284
v. Irwin, 18 Pick. 95	241, 259	Hedgley v. Holt, 4 C. & P. 104	65, 69
v. Loring, 10 Cush. 267	983	Heermans v. Ellsworth, 64 N. Y.	
v. Wells, 2 Abb. N. C.		159	845
444	954	Heffelfinger v. Shutz, 16 S. & R.	
Hazlehurst v. R. R., 43 Ga. 13	129, 140	44	698
Hazleton Co. v. Buck Mountain		Heffield v. Meadows, L. R. 4 C. P.	
Co., 57 Penn. St. 301	661	595	515
Hazlett v. Burge, 22 Iowa, 535	257	Hegeman v. M'Call, 1 Phil. 529	797
Head v. Diggon, 3 M. & R. 97	2, 787	Hegler v. Eddy, 53 Cal. 597	976
v. Tattersall, L. R. 7 Ex. 7		Hehn v. Hehn, 23 Penn. St. 415	756
	320, 572, 590, 610	Heichew v. Hamilton, 4 Greene	
Heald v. Ins. Co., 111 Mass. 38	298	(Iowa), 317	431, 433
v. Wright, 75 Ill. 17	284	Heilbron v. Bissell, 1 Bailey Eq.	
Healy v. Gorman, 3 Green (N. J.)		430	932
328	463	Heilbut v. Nevill, L. R. 5 C. P.	
Heap v. Marris, L. R. 2 Q. B. D.		478	950
630	169	Heilbutt v. Hickson, L. R. 7 C. P.	
Heaphy v. Hill, 2 Sim. & S. 29	890	438	607, 915, 916, 918

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Heim v. Vogle, 69 Mo. 529		Hendrick v. Lindsay, 93 U. S.	
786 a, 789, 809		143	785
Heineman v. Newman, 55 Ga. 262	376	Hendricks v. Mount, 2 South. 738	340
Helpenstein's Est., 77 Penn. St.		Henfree v. Bromley, 6 East, 309	702
328	528	Hening v. Powell, 33 Mo. 468	382
Hellams v. Abercrombie, 15 S. C.		Henkel v. Pape, L. R. 6 Exch. 7	
110	385		27, 190
Heller v. Crawford, 37 Ind. 279	390	Henley v. Wilson, 77 N. C. 216	678
Hellman's Will, in re, L. R. 2 Eq.		Hennen v. Gilman, 20 La. An.	
363	654	241	473
Helm v. Wilson, 4 Mo. 41	309	Hennequin v. Naylor, 24 N. Y.	
Helmetag v. Frank, 61 Ala. 67	91	139	249, 258, 262
Helms v. Kearns, 40 Ind. 124		Hennessey v. Hill, 52 Ill. 281	535
785, 786 a		Hennighausen v. Tischer, 50 Md.	
Helps v. Clayton, 17 C. B. N. S.		583	1021
553	68	Henniker v. Wigg, 4 Q. B. 792	933
v. Winterbottom, 2 B. &		Henrioid v. Neusbaumer, 69 Mo.	
Ad. 431	549, 620, 955	96	282
Hemenway v. Hemenway, 5 Pick.		Henry v. Fine, 23 Ark. 417	106
389	724	v. Hinman, 25 Minn. 199	377
Hemingway v. Hamilton, 4 M. &		v. Mt. Pleasant, 70 Mo. 500	
W. 115	243		814, 950
Hemmenway v. Stone, 7 Mass. 58		v. Ritenour, 31 Ind. 136	
825, 828			118, 119
Hemmer v. Cooper, 8 Allen, 334	260	v. Root, 33 N. Y. 526	
Hemphill v. McClimans, 24 Penn.		48 a, 58, 59, 66	
St. 367	512, 513	v. Tupper, 29 Vt. 358	300
Hendee v. Howe, 33 N. J. Eq. 92	972	Henshaw v. Robins, 9 Met. 83	
v. Pinkerton, 14 Allen,		212, 219, 223, 224, 225, 227, 250, 903	
381	137, 680	Hensley v. Baker, 10 Mo. 157	230
Henderson v. Barnewall, 1 Y. &		Henson v. King, 3 Jones, N. C.	
J. 387	180	419	219
v. Dickey, 35 Mo. 120	194	Hentz v. Clawson, 34 Leg. Int. 5	76
v. Hackney, 23 Ga.		Henwood v. Oliver, 1 Q. B. 409	979
383	202	Hepburn v. Auld, 1 Cranch, 321 ;	
v. Hammond, 19 Ala.		5 Cranch, 262	888, 977
340	833	Herbert v. Ford, 29 Me. 546	233
v. Henderson, 3 Hare,		v. Pigott, 2 C. & M. 384	
100	936		821, 1038
v. Lacon, L. R. 5 Eq.		v. Turball, 1 Keb. 589	30
249	255	Hereford Waggon Co., in re, L. R.	
v. Lewis, 9 S. & R.		2 Ch. D. 621	255 a
379	1021	Hern v. Nichols, 1 Salk. 289	
v. McDuffee, 5 N. H.		269, 270, 271	
38	765	Hernandez v. Ins. Co., 6 Blatch.	
v. McGregor, 30 Wis.		317	652
78	98, 103, 106	Heron v. Hoffner, 3 Rawle, 393	814
v. Moore, 5 Cranch,		Herrick v. Baldwin, 17 Minn. 209	696
11	935	v. Malin, 22 Wend. 388	698
v. Palmer, 71 Ill. 579	483	Herrin v. Libby, 36 Me. 350	
v. R. R., 17 Tex. 560		287, 290, 722, 732	
269, 270		Herring v. Dorell, 8 Dow. P. C.	
v. Stevenson, L. R. 2		604	532
Sc. Ap. 470	6	v. Sanger, 3 John. Cas.	
v. Stobart, 5 Exch. 99		71	955
831, 935, 1003, 1004		v. Skaggs, 62 Ala. 180	
v. Waggoner, 2 Lea,		217, 250, 259	
133	343	Herrington v. Robertson, 71 N. Y.	
v. Wild, 2 Camp. 561	946	280	616
Hendrick v. Crowley, 31 Cal. 471	540	Hersey v. Veazie, 24 Me. 9	139

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hersh v. R. R., 74 Penn. St. 181	442 a	Higgon's v. Burton, 26 L. J. Ex.	
Hershey v. Keembortz, 6 Barr, 128	902	342	292
Hertzog v. Hertzog, 29 Penn. St.		Higgs v. Tea Co., L. R. 4 Ex. 387	846
465	719	High v. Kistner, 44 Iowa, 79	245
Hervey v. Savery, 48 Iowa, 313	208	Highberger v. Stiffler, 21 Md. 338	
Hervey-Bathurst v. Stanley, L. R.		159, 161	
4 C. D. 251	666	Highlands Chem. Co. v. Matthews,	
Hesketh v. Fawcett, 11 M. & W.		76 N. Y. 145	900
356	979	Highmore v. Primrose, 5 M. & S.	
Hesse v. Stevenson, 3 B. & P. 565	553	65	774
Hesser v. Steiner, 5 W. & S. 476		Hight v. Bacon, 126 Mass. 10	
	37, 66	224, 227, 905, 907	
Hestonville R. R. v. Phila., 89		Hildebrand v. People, 56 N. Y.	
Penn. St. 210	1062	394	182
Hetrick's Appeal, 58 Penn. St. 477	161	Hildreth v. Sands, 2 Johns. Ch.	
Hewes v. Bayley, 20 Pick. 96	818	35	376
Hewitt v. Anderson, 56 Cal. 476	24	Hileman v. Wright, 9 Ind. 126	208
Hewson v. Paxson, Sup. Ct. Penn.		Hill v. Anderson, 5 Sm. & M. 216	
1881; 12 Rep. 313	887, 888		48, 50
Hexter v. Loughry, 6 Ill. App.		v. Beebe, 13 N. Y. 556	956
362	726	v. Boyle, L. R. 4 Eq. 260	424
Heymann v. R., L. R. 8 Q. B. 102;		v. Brower, 76 N. C. 124	259
12 Cox C. C. 383	379	v. Buckley, 17 Ves. 394	282
v. R. R., L. R. 7 Eq.		v. Buckminster, 5 Pick. 391	532
154	284, 289	v. Cooley, 46 Penn. St. 259	
Heysham v. Dettre, 89 Penn. St.		695, 698	
506	149	v. Duncan, 110 Mass. 238	83
Heywood v. Heywood, 42 Me. 229		v. Dunham, 7 Gray, 543	391
619, 622, 623		v. Gray, 1 Stark. 352,	
Heyworth v. Hutchinson, L. R. 2		248, 249, 259, 260	
Q. B. 447	189	v. Green, 4 Pick. 114	198, 603
v. Knight, 17 C. B. N.		v. Halford, 2 B. & P. 413	599
S. 298	645	v. Hobart, 16 Me. 164	230, 882
Hiatt v. Griswold, 5 Fed. Rep.		v. Hovey, 26 Vt. 109	
573	463, 933		557, 559, 606
Hibbert v. Shree, 1 Camp. 113	914	v. Ins. Co. 2 Mich. 476	256
Hibblewhite v. M'Morine, 6 M. &		v. Miller, 76 N. Y. 32	652
W. 200	687	v. Moore, 40 Me. 515	417
Hibler v. McCartney, 31 Ala. 501	327	v. Parker, 10 Ill. Ap. 323	665
Hichens v. Congreve, 4 Russ. 562		v. Patten, 8 East, 373	705
251, 282		v. R. R., 63 N. Y. 101	278
Hickey v. Burt, 7 Taunt. 48	950	v. Rewee, 11 Met. 268	
Hickman v. Upsall, L. R. 4 C. D.		742, 748, 919	
144	732	v. Robbins, 22 Mich. 475	933
Hicks v. Burhans, 10 Johns. 243	514	v. Royds, L. R. 8 Eq. 290	728
v. Cram, 17 Vt. 449	833	v. Sleeper, 58 Ind. 221	954
v. Marshall, 8 Hun, 327	123	v. Spear, 50 N. H. 253	
v. Skinner, 71 N. C. 539	230	343, 345, 361, 430, 445	
Higgins's case, 6 Coke, 44	805	v. Tucker, 1 Taunt. 7	815
Higgins v. Emmons, 5 Conn. 76		v. Voorhies, 22 Penn. St. 68	860
576, 869, 882		v. West, 8 Ohio, 222	89
v. Mendenhall, 51 Iowa,		v. Wilson, L. R. 8 Ch. 888	205
135	730	Hill Manufacturing Co. v. R. R.,	
v. Moore, 34 N. Y. 417	945	104 Mass. 122	137
v. Murray, 73 N. Y. 252	877	Hiller v. English, 4 Strobh. 486	390
v. Pitt, 4 Ex. 312	380	Hillier v. Ins. Co., 3 Barr, 470	1026
v. Senior, 8 M. & W. 834	202	Hilliker v. Loop, 5 Vt. 116	814
Higginson v. Clowes, 15 Ves. 516	207	Hillman v. Wilcox, 30 Me. 170	219
v. Simpson, L. R. 2 C.		Hills v. Bannister, 8 Cow. 31	810 a
P. D. 76	449, 451	v. Barnes, 11 N. H. 395	698

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION	
Hills v. Snell, 104 Mass.	173	736	Hitchcock v. Galveston, 96 U. S.	
v. Sughrue, 15 M. & W.	353		341 129, 139, 140, 143	
	298, 302, 311		v. Giddings, 4 Price,	
v. Tallman, 21 Wend.	674	1022	135 179, 298	
Hilton v. Burley, 2 N. H.	193	932	v. Humfrey, 5 M. & G.	
v. Eckersley, 6 E. & B.	47		559 515	
	430, 439, 441		Hitchin v. Groom, 5 C. B.	515
v. Houghton, 35 Me.	143		Hitchings v. Van Brunt, 38 N. Y.	667
	382, 391		335 427	
v. Southwick, 17 Me.	303		Hite v. State, 9 Yerg.	357 634
	16, 505		Hitner's Appeal, 54 Penn. St.	117 90, 395
v. Woods, L. R. 4 Eq.	432		Hixon v. Hetherington, 57 Ala.	165 858
	421, 422, 424, 429		Hoadley v. Trans. Co., 115 Mass.	304 309
Himes v. Keller, 3 W. & S.	401	765, 769	Hoare v. Rennie, 5 H. & N.	19 580
Himmelmann v. Fitzpatrick,	50		Hobbs v. R. R., L. R. 10 Q. B.	111 1046
Cal. 650		972	Hobday v. Peters, 8 Beav.	354 161.
Hinchcliffe v. Barwick, L. R. 5			Hochster v. Baruch, 5 Daly,	540 13
Ex. D. 177		572, 590, 593	v. De la Tour, 2 E. & B.	678 13, 885, 885 a
Hinckley v. Arey, 27 Me.	362		Hockenbury v. Meyers, 6 Vroom,	345 532
	504, 935, 1003		Hodgdon v. Naglee, 5 W. & S.	217 797
Hind v. Holdship, 2 Watts,	104	507	v. Wight, 36 Me.	326 938
Hinde v. Gray, 1 M. & G.	195	430, 431	Hodge v. Vavisor, 1 Rolle R.	413 515
v. Longworth, 11 Wheat.		91	Hodgeden v. Hubbard, 18 Vt.	504 258
		724	Hodges v. Harris, 6 Pick.	360 298
v. Smith, 6 Lansing,	464	533	v. Saunders, 17 Pick.	470 533
Hindert v. Schneider, 4 Ill. Ap.		469	Hodgkinson v. Fletcher, 4 Camp.	70 88
	203		Hodgson v. Anderson, 3 B. & C.	842 853
Hindle v. O'Brien, 1 Taunt.	413		v. Barrett, 33 Oh. St.	63 953
Hindley v. Westmeath, 6 B. & C.			v. Davies, 2 Camp.	530 631, 919
	200	87, 395, 614	v. Shaw, 3 My. & K.	183 765
Hinds v. Chamberlain, 6 N. H.		483	v. Temple, 5 Taunt.	181 343
	225		Hodsden v. Harridge, 2 Wms.	-Saun. 61 892
Hine v. Champion, L. R. 7 C. D.		241	Hodsdon v. Wilkins, 7 Greenl.	113 405
Hineley v. Margaritz, 3 Barr,	428		Hodson v. Terrill, 1 C. & M.	797 354
	41, 57, 63		Hoe v. Sanborn, 21 N. Y.	552 224, 227, 230
Hines v. Potts, 56 Miss.	346	100	Hoeflinger v. Wells, 47 Wis.	628 955
Hinesburgh v. Sumner, 9 Vt.	23		Hoeverler v. Mugele, 66 Penn. St.	348 495, 540
	339, 484		Hoffman v. Carow, 20 Wend.	21 ; 736
Hinkley v. Fowler, 15 Me.	285	507, 788	22 Wend. 285	
v. Walter, 8 Watts,	260 ;		v. Ins. Co., 32 N. Y.	405 667
9 Watts,	179	845	v. Noble, 6 Met.	68 733
Hinman v. Ins. Co., 36 Wis.	159	338 a	v. Strohecker, 7 Watts,	
Hinton v. Hinton, 2 Ves.	631	144	86 ; 9 Watts,	183 258, 733
v. Sparkes, L. R. 3 C. P.		743	v. Vallejo, 45 Cal.	564 421, 429
	161	340	Hoffmire v. Rice, 22 Kan.	749 1030
Hipple v. Rice, 28 Penn. St.	406	340		
Hirn v. Ohio, 1 Ohio St.	15	1064		
Hirschfield v. R. R., L. R. 2 Q. B.				
D. 1		201, 264		
v. Smith, L. R. 1 C. P.		700		
	340			
Hirschman v. Budd, L. R. 8 Ex.		700		
	171			
Hitch v. Davis, 3 Md. Ch.	266	494		
Hitchcock v. Coker, 6 A. & E.	438			
	432, 434			
v. Covell, 20 Wend.	167 ;			
23 Wend.	611	291, 735		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hoge v. Hoge, 1 Watts, 163	533	Holmes v. Blogg, 8 Taunt. 35,	
Hogg v. Longstreth, 97 Penn. St.		508; 2 Moore, 552	
255	759	42, 48, 56, 58, 59	
Hoghton v. Hoghton, 15 Beav. 278		v. De Camp, 1 Johns. 34	774
161, 164		v. Drew, 16 Hun, 491	338 a
Hogue v. Davis, 8 Grat. 4	765	v. Fall River Bank, 126	
Hoit v. Underhill, 9 N. H. 436;		Mass. 353	953
10 N. H. 220	56	v. Field, 12 Ill. 424	397
Hoitt v. Holcomb, 32 N. H. 185		v. Higgins, 1 B. & C. 74	807
244, 245		v. Hill, 19 Mo. 159	150
Holborn Union v. St. Leonard, L.		v. Jaques, L. R. 1 Q. B.	
R. 2 Q. B. D. 145	829	376	819
Holbrook v. Bullard, 10 Pick. 68	613	v. Martin, 10 Ga. 503	433
v. Burt, 22 Pick. 546		v. Newcastle Abattoir Co.,	
244, 245, 919		L. R. 1 Ch. D. 682	135
v. Connar, 60 Me. 578	260	v. Penney, 3 Kay & J. 90	376
v. Cooper, 44 Mich. 373	151	v. Richet, 56 Cal. 307	549
v. Holbrook, 30 Vt. 432		v. Trumper, 22 Mich. 427	695
540, 683		Holt v. Bacon, 25 Miss. 567	130
Holcomb v. Stimpson, 8 Vt. 141		v. Clarendieux, 2 Str. 937	73
198, 486, 525		v. Ely, 1 E. & B. 795	730, 731
Holden Mill Co. v. Westervelt, 67		v. Schmidt, 59 N. Y. 253	752
Me. 446	607	Home Ins. Co. v. Baltimore, 93 U.	
Holder v. R. R., 71 Ill. 106	720	S. 527	533
Hole v. Bradbury, L. R. 12 Ch.		v. Holway, 55 Iowa,	
D. 886	180	571	570 a
v. Harrison, 1 Ch. Cas. 246	765	v. Sherwood, 72 Mo.	
Holladay v. Kennard, 12 Wall.		461	141
254	319	Homer v. Ashford, 3 Bing. 322	434
v. Patterson, 5 Oreg.		v. Ins. Co. 67 N. Y. 478	603
177	414	v. Perkins, 124 Mass. 431	259
Holland v. Anderson, 38 Mo. 55	249	v. Thwing, 3 Pick, 492	53
v. Eyre, 2 Sim. & St. 194	4	Homes v. Aery, 12 Mass. 134	740
v. Hensley, 4 Iowa, 222		v. Dana, 12 Mass. 190	528, 536
166, 494		v. Smith, 20 Me. 264	897
v. Russell, 1 B. & S. 424	755	Honck v. Muller, L. R. 7 Q. B. D.	
Holliday v. Atkinson, 5 B. & C.		92	580
501	494, 512, 539	Honeyman v. Marryat, 21 Beav.	
v. White, 33 Tex. 447	677	14; 6 H. L. C. 112	4, 5, 9 a, 10, 646
Hollins v. Fowler, L. R. 7 H. L.		Hood v. Barrington, L. R. 6 Eq.	
757	183, 283, 292	218	804
Hollis v. Chapman, 36 Tex. 1	326	v. R. R., 22 Conn. 1, 502	135, 141
Hollister v. Nowlen, 19 Wend.		v. R. R., 23 Conn. 609	129
234	327	Hook v. Craighead, 32 Mo. 405	205
Holloway v. Griffith, 32 Iowa, 409	885	v. Gray, 6 Barb. 398	338, 511
v. Lowe, 7 Port. 488	421, 427	v. Pratt, 78 N. Y. 371	525
v. Millard, 1 Mad. 414	377	v. Turner, 22 Mo. 333	443
Holman v. Bailey, 3 Met. 55	972	Hooker v. Vandewater, 4 Denio,	
v. Johnson, 1 Cowp. 341		349	442
340, 343, 446		Hooper v. Brundage, 22 Me. 460	842
v. Loynes, 4 De G. M. &		v. Edwards, 18 Ala. 280	388
G. 270	161, 167	v. Keay, L. R. 1 Q. B. D.	
Holme v. Guppy, 3 M. & W. 387		178	933
312, 603		v. Webb, 27 Minn. 485	647
v. Hammond, L. R. 7 Ex.		Hoopes v. Dundas, 10 Barr, 75	397
218	323	v. Strasburger, 37 Md.	
Holmes' App. 77 Penn. St. 50	186	390	282, 730
Holmes' Est. 3 Giff. Ch. 337	161	Hooton v. Ransom, 6 Mo. Ap. 19	.77
Holmes v. Bailey, 92 Penn. St. 57	793	Hoover v. Pierce, 27 Miss. 13	235, 340
v. Bank, 87 Penn. St. 525	793	Hope v. Everhart, 70 Penn. St. 531	100

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Hope v. Financial Society, L. R.		Horton v. Weiner, 124 Mass.	92
4 Ch. D. 327	135		239, 377
v. Hope, 4 De G. M. & G.		Hosford v. Nichols, 1 Paige,	220 463
328; 8 De G. M. & G.		Hoskinson v. Eliot, 62 Penn. St.	
731 360, 394, 400, 403, 415		393 684, 832, 860	
Hopkins v. Beebe, 26 Penn. St.		Hosley v. Holmes, 27 Mich.	416 107 a
85 380 a		Hotchkiss v. Bank, 21 Wal.	354 795
v. Hitchcock, 14 C. B.		v. Barnes, 34 Conn.	27 515
N. S. 65 560		v. Judd, 12 Allen,	447 520
v. Lane, 25 Alb. L. J.		v. Mosher, 48 N. Y.	478 938
175; 87 N. Y. 501 1021		Hotel Co. v. Wade, 97 U. S.	13 470
v. Langton, 30 Wis.	379 377	Hotz's Estate, 38 Penn. St.	422 397
v. Logan, 5 M. & W.		Hough v. Hunt, 2 Ohio,	495 165, 518
241 514, 523, 774		v. May, 4 Ad. & El.	954 953, 986
v. Mazyck, 1 Hill Ch.			
(S. C.) 242 199		v. Rawson, 17 Ill.	588 558, 581
v. Prescott, 4 C. B.	578		
	339, 509	v. Richardson, 3 Story,	
v. Richardson, 9 Grat.		659 236, 242, 246,	
485 514		282, 288, 289	
v. Sievert, 58 Mo.	201 239	Houghton v. Houghton, 37 Me.	
v. Ware, L. R. 4 Ex.		72 1019	
268 953		v. Ins. Co., 8 Metc.	
v. Watt, 13 Ill.	298 161	114 256	
v. West, 83 Penn. St.		v. Page, 2 N. H.	42 463
109 469		Houldsworth v. Bk., L. R. 5 App.	
Hopkinson v. Lee, 6 Q. B.	964 814	Cas. 317 131, 270, 275	
v. Leeds, 78 Penn. St.		Houlston v. Smyth, 3 Bing.	127 86
396 405		House of Employment v. Murray,	
Hopper v. Burness, L. R. 1 C. P.		32 Penn. St. 178 512	
D. 137 715		Household Ins. Co. v. Grant, L.	
Hoppin v. Tobey, 9 R. I.	42 161	R. 4 Ex. D. 216 18, 27	
Horbach v. Gray, 8 Watts,	492 181	Houston v. Mills, 1 M. & R.	325 365
Horback v. Reeside, 6 Whart.	47 759	v. Turk, 7 Yerg.	13 74
Horder v. Horder, 23 Kan.	391 91	Houston, etc. R. R. v. Miller,	51
Horn v. Buck, 48 Md.	358 219	Tex. 270 42	
v. Ins. Co., 64 Barb.	81 256	Hovey v. Chase, 52 Me.	304 110
v. Ivy, 1 Mod. 18; 2 Keb.		v. Grant, 52 N. H.	569 258
567 134		v. Hobson, 53 Me. 451; 55	
v. Wiatt, 60 Ala.	297 376	Me. 256 102, 107,	
Hornbeck v. Sleght, 12 Johns.		110, 111, 115	
199 788		How v. How, 1 N. H.	49 799
Hornby v. Lacy, 6 M. & S.	166 945	Howard v. Baillie, 2 H. Bl.	618 1038
Horne v. Rouquette, L. R. 3 Q.		v. Branner, 23 La. An.	
B. D. 514 797, 872		369 463	
v. State, 84 N. C.	362 1067	v. Brower, 37 Ohio St.	
Horneffer v. Duress, 13 Wis.	603 91	402 624	
Horner v. Graves, 7 Bing.	735	v. Brownhill, 23 L. J.	
	430, 431, 433	Q. B. 23 727	
v. Wood, 23 N. Y.	350 848	v. Daly, 61 N. Y.	362
Horsefall v. Mather, Holt N. P.	7 515	18, 603, 885	
Horsey's case, L. R. 5 Eq.	561 135	v. Edgell, 17 Vt.	9
Horsfall v. Thomas, 1 H. & C.	90	165, 166, 516, 518	
	217, 242	v. Emerson, 110 Mass.	
Hort's case, L. R. 1 Ch. D.	307 864	320 222	
Horton v. Buffinton, 105 Mass.		v. Gould, 28 Vt.	523 250
399 383		v. Hoey, 23 Wend.	350
v. Cook, 2 Watts,	40 833		224, 905
v. Dewey, 53 Wis.	410 79, 91	v. Ins. Co., 109 Mass.	384 637
v. Maffitt, 14 Minn.	289 972	v. Kimball, 65 Me.	308 936

TABLE OF CASES.

SECTION	SECTION
Howard v. Miner, 20 Me. 325 871, 872, 873, 990, 991, 992 v. Norton, 65 Barb. 161 521, 533, 1000, 1006 v. Patrick, 38 Mich. 795 677 v. Puffer, 23 Vt. 365 199 v. Shepherd, 9 C. B. 297 793 v. Sheward, L. R. 2 C. P. 148 269	Hubbard v. Cummings, 1 Greenl. 11 48, 59 v. Harnden's Ex. Co., 10 R. I. 244 309, 319 v. Marshall, 50 Wis. 322 22 v. Martin, 8 Yerg. 498 198 v. Matthews, 54 N. Y. 43 473 v. Miller, 27 Mich. 15 432, 433 v. Moore, 24 La. An. 591 345
Howden v. Haigh, 11 A. & E. 1033 380 v. Simpson, 10 Ad. & El. 793 402, 509	Hubbell v. Currier, 10 Allen, 333 377 v. Meigs, 50 N. Y. 480 238, 239, 259
Howe v. Dewing, 2 Gray, 476 677, 679 v. Handley, 25 Me. 116 817 v. Howe, 99 Mass. 88 102, 107, 158 v. Huntington, 15 Me. 350 558, 606, 882 v. Litchfield, 3 Allen, 443 486, 525 v. Nickels, 22 Me. 175 570 v. Richards, 102 Mass. 64 n 516 v. Wildes, 34 Me. 566 512	Hubbert v. Borden, 6 Whart. 79 784 Hudson v. Bartram, 3 Madd. 440 890 v. Bradley, 2 Cliff. 130 956 v. Hill, 43 L. J. C. P. 273 886 v. McCartney, 33 Wis. 331 594 v. Reel, 5 Barr, 279 285, 698 v. Robinson, 4 M. & S. 475 830 v. Swift, 20 Johns. 24 743 v. Temple, 29 Beav. 536 887
Howe Machine Co. v. Willie, 85 Ill. 333 520, 746	Huff v. Nickerson, 27 Me. 106 655 v. Shepard, 58 Mo. 242 3
Howell v. Biddlecom, 62 Barb. 131 214, 244 v. Coupland, L. R. 9 Q. B. 462; 1 Q. B. D. 258 300, 314, 315, 316, 323, 330, 547 v. Ins. Co., 44 N. Y. 276 547 v. Medler, 41 Mich. 641 1029 v. Ransom, 11 Paige, 538 427	Huffman v. Hummer, 17 N. J. Eq. 263 888 Huffstater v. Hayes, 64 Barb. 573 930 Huggins v. People, 39 Ill. 241 321 Hughes v. Boyd, 2 Sneed, 512 397 v. Easten, 4 J. J. Marsh. 572 677 v. Edwards, 9 Wheat. 489 329, 547 v. Gallans, 10 Phila. 618 52, 53 v. Humphreys, 6 B. & C. 680 321, 613 v. Israel, 73 Mo. 538 956 v. Thorpe, 5 M. & W. 656 779 v. Wheeler, 8 Cow. 77 954
Howes v. Bigelow, 13 Mass. 384 76 Howeth v. Anderson, 25 Tex. 557 318 Howie v. Rea, 70 N. C. 559 223, 905 Howland v. Doyle, 5 R. I. 33 230 v. Leach, 11 Pick. 151 554, 558 v. Lounds, 51 N. Y. 604 24	Huguenin v. Baseley, 14 Ves. 273; 2 Lead. Cas. Eq. 4th Am. ed. 1156 159, 161, 167
Howley v. Whipple, 48 N. H. 487 27 Howson v. Hancock, 8 T. R. 575 352, 370, 729 Hoxie v. Lincoln, 25 Vt. 206 63 v. Price, 31 Wis. 82 91 Hoy v. Holt, 91 Penn. St. 88 318, 319 Hoyle v. Cornwallis, 1 Str. 387 390 v. Stowe, 2 Dev. & B. 320 33, 59, 61, 63	Hulet v. Stratton, 5 Cush. 539 382 Huling v. Drexel, 7 Watts, 126 467 v. Hugg, 1 W. & S. 418 1019 Hull v. Connolly, 3 McCord, 6 70 v. Hull, 48 Conn. 250 298 v. Ruggles, 56 N. Y. 424 335, 458
Hoyt v. Adees, 3 Lans. 173 123 v. Byrnes, 2 Fairf. 475 982 v. McLaughlin, 52 Wis. 280 778 v. Wilkinson, 10 Pick. 31 776	Hulse v. Hulse, 17 C. B. 711 512 v. Young, 16 Johns. 1 792
Hubbard v. Belden, 27 Vt. 645 322 v. Briggs, 31 N. Y. 518 243 v. Coolidge, 1 Met. 84 6	Hultz v. Gibbs, 66 Penn. St. 360 86, 88 Humble v. Hunter, 12 Q. B. 310 184 Hume v. Hord, 5 Grat. 374 77 v. Peploe, 8 East, 168 980, 981 Humphrey v. Douglass, 10 Vt. 71 53 v. Jones, 71 Mo. 62 199

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Humphrey v. Mercant. Ass., 50		Hunter v. Moul, Sup. Ct. Penn.	
Iowa, 607	130, 140	1881; 12 Rep. 605	954
Humphreys v. Comline, 8 Blackf.		v. Nolf, 71 Penn. St. 282	407
516	222	v. Osterhoudt, 11 Barb.	
v. Guillo, 13 N. H.		33	931
385	698	v. Walters, L. R. 7 Ch.	
v. Mattoon, 43 Iowa,		75 180, 185, 264, 283,	939
556	289	v. Welsh, 1 Stark. 178	723
v. Reed, 6 Whart.		v. Westbrook, 2 C. & P.	
435	708	578	35
Humphries v. Carvalho, 16 East,		v. Wetsell, 84 N. Y. 549	990
45	13, 589	v. Wright, 12 Allen, 548	
Hungerford v. Earle, 2 Vern. 261	376	869, 877	
Hunsucker v. Elmore, 54 Ind. 209	180	Huntingford v. Massey, 1 F. & F.	
Hunt v. Adams, 6 Mass. 519	696	690	239, 377
v. Bass, 2 Dev. Eq. 292	149	Huntington v. Bank, 6 Pick. 340	
v. Brewer, 68 Me. 262	924	973, 975	
v. De Blaquiére, 5 Bing. 550		v. Bardwell, 46 N. H.	
86, 92		492	444
v. Gilmore, 59 Penn. St.		v. Clark, 39 Conn.	
450	1029	540	380
v. Gray, 35 N. J. L. 227	698	v. Gilmore, 14 Barb.	
v. Hall, 37 Ala. 702	463	243	496
v. Holden, 2 Mass. 168	896	v. Hall, 36 Me. 501	230
v. Hunt, 4 D. F. J. 221; 10		v. Knox, 7 Cush. 371	794
W. R. 215	395	Hurd v. Gill, 45 N. Y. 341	312
v. Knickerbocker, 5 Johns.		v. Hall, 12 Wis. 112	199
327	458	Hurlburt v. Ins. Co., 2 Sumn.	
v. Livermore, 5 Pick. 395	601	471	1011
v. Massey, 5 B. & Ad. 902		Hurst v. Litchfield, 39 N. Y. 377	417
31, 36, 37, 66, 893		Husband v. Davis, 10 C. B. 645	951
v. Moore, 2 Barr, 105		Huscombe v. Standing, Cro. Jac.	
103, 159, 161, 241, 244		187	146
v. Otis Co., 4 Met. 464	718	Huse v. Alexander, 2 Metc. 157	856
v. Peake, 5 Cow. 475	50, 73	v. Preston, 51 Vt. 245	376
v. Rousmanier, 2 Mason,		Huss v. Morris, 63 Penn. St. 367	
342; 3 Mason, 294; 8		181, 199, 202, 205, 206	
Wheat. 174; 1 Pet. 1		Hussey v. Crickett, 3 Camp. 168	449
198, 199, 832		v. Jewett, 9 Mass. 100	64
v. Sackett, 31 Mich. 18	230	v. Roquemore, 27 Ala. 281	382
v. Shackelford, 55 Miss. 94	1025	Huston v. Cantril, 11 Leigh, 136	
v. Silk, 5 East, 449	748, 919	377, 537	
v. Stuart, 53 Md. 225	284	v. Mitchell, 14 Serg. & R.	
v. Test, 8 Ala. 713	427	307	944
v. Thompson, 61 Mo. 148	80	v. Moorhead, 7 Barr, 45	468
v. Wyman, 100 Mass. 198		v. Wickerham, 8 Watts,	
14, 16, 589, 590		519	799
Hunter v. Atkins, 3 M. & K. 113		Hutchen v. Gibson, 1 Bush, 270	403
167, 254		Hutcheson v. Blakeman, 3 Met.	
v. Bilyeu, 30 Ill. 228	207	(Ky.) 80	4, 18
v. Boucher, 3 Pick. 289	87	Hutchings v. Munger, 41 N. Y.	
v. Edney, London Law		155	576
Times, Jan. 7, 1882, p.		Hutchins v. Hebbard, 34 N. Y.	
168	113	26	870
v. Hunt, 1 C. B. 300	763	v. Hutchins, 7 Hill, 104	243
v. Hunter, 17 Barb. 25	679	v. Olcott, 4 Vt. 549	956
v. Hunter, 10 W. Va. 321	239	v. Scott, 2 M. & W. 809	
v. Lawrence, 11 Grat. 111	161	696, 702	
v. McLaughlin, 43 Ind.		Hutchinson v. Bank, 48 Barb.	
38	259, 261	302	778

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION	I.	SECTION
Hutchinson v. Brown, 1 Clarke, Ch. 408	119	Idle v. Thornton, 3 Camp. 274	310, 563
v. Heyworth, 9 Ad. & El. 395	855	Ill. Deaf and Dumb Inst. v. Platt, 5 Ill. Ap. 567	588
v. Ledlie, 36 Penn. St. 112	351	Ilseley v. Jewett, 2 Met. (Mass.) 168	954, 956
v. Reid, 3 Camp. 329	844, 1019	v. Merriam, 7 Cush. 242	1068
v. Sandt, 4 Rawle, 234	123	v. Stubbs, 9 Mass. 65	792
v. Swartsweller, 4 Stew. Eq. 205	955	Imlay v. Huntingdon, 20 Conn. 146	77
v. Sydney, 10 Ex. 438	1029	Imperial Merc. Co. v. Coleman, L. R. 6 H. L. 189	161
v. Tindall, 2 Green Ch. 357	119, 159	Inchbald v. Tea Co., 17 C. B. N. S. 733	712
v. Underwood, 27 Tex. 255	77	Ind's case, L. R. 7 Ch. 485	207
v. Watkins, 17 Iowa, 475	291	Indep. Ins. Co. v. Thomas, 104 Mass. 192	984
Hutchison v. Bowker, 5 M. & W. 535	4, 635	India Bagging Asso. v. Kock, 14 La. An. 168	442
Hutley v. Marshall, 46 L. T. N. S. 186	662	Indiana. R. R. v. Anthony, 43 Ind. 183	131
Hutmacher v. Harris, 38 Penn. St. 491	165	v. O'Reily, 38 Ind. 140	756
Huttman v. Boulnois, 2 C. & P. 510	717	v. Tyng, 63 N. Y. 653	241, 270, 275
Hutton v. Brown, 45 L. T. N. S. 343	896	Inge v. Bond, 3 Hawks, 101	230
v. Bulloch, L. R. 9 Q. B. 572	202	Ingersoll v. Martin, Ct. of App. Md. 1882; 13 Rep.	513
v. Eyre, 6 Taunt. 289	761	782	513
v. Hutton, 3 Barr, 100	395	v. Rhoades, Hill & Den. Sup. 371	513
v. Parker, 7 Dowl. P. C. 739	434	Ingledeu v. Douglass, 2 Stark. 33	65, 66
Hyatt v. Boyle, 5 Gill & J. 110	223, 224, 903	Inglis v. Snug Harbor, 3 Pet. 99	655
v. Clements, 65 Ind. 12	927	Ingraham v. Baldwin, 9 N. Y. 45	102, 107
v. James, 2 Bush, 463	473	v. Disborough, 47 N. Y. 421	842
Hybart v. Parker, 4 C. B. N. S. 209	784, 819	v. Hall, 11 S. & R. 78	936, 1007
Hyde v. Goodnow, 3 N. Y. 266	877	Ingram v. Ingram, 4 Jones, N. C. 188	443
v. Nav. Co., 5 T. R. 389	871	Innes v. Dunlop, 8 T. R. 595	526
v. Noble, 13 N. H. 494	7	v. Stephenson, 1 M. & Rob. 145	951
v. Stone, 9 Cow. 230	76	Innis v. Templeton, 11 Pittsb. L. J. N. S. 73	79
v. Trent. Co., 5 T. R. 389	327	Insurance Co. v. Mahone, 21 Wall. 152	247
v. Wrench, 3 Beav. 334	4, 9 a	v. Merse, 20 Wal. 445	416
Hydraulic Engineer. Co. v. Mc- Haffie, L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 670	886	v. Slaughter, 12 Wall. 404	670
Hyer v. Hyatt, 3 Cr. C. C. 276	36	Internat. Life Ass. Co., in re, L. R. 10 Eq. 312	138
v. Little, 5 C. E. Green, 443	158	Ionides v. Ins. Co., L. R. 6 Q. B. 674	207
Hylton v. Hylton, 2 Ves. Sr. 547	161, 398	v. Pender, L. R. 9 Q. B. 537	256
Hyman v. Cain, 3 Jones, L. 111	66		
Hynds v. Hays, 25 Ind. 31	338, 511		
Hyslip v. French, 52 Wis. 513	285		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Ireland v. Livingston, L. R. 5 H.		Jackson v. Burke, 1 Dill. 311	930
L. 395	654, 656	v. Carpenter, 11 Johns.	
Ireson v. Pearman, 3 B. & C. 799	1046	539	56, 60, 61, 63
Irick v. Fulton, 3 Grat. 193	190, 206	v. Cleveland, 15 Wis. 107	708
Irons v. Irons, 5 R. I. 264	1026	v. Cobbin, 8 M. & W. 790	
v. Smallpiece, 2 B. & Ald.			500, 514
551	496, 682	v. Crysler, 1 Johns. Cas.	
Irvin v. Bleakley, 67 Penn. St. 24	285	125	604
Irvine v. Bank, 2 W. & S. 190	247	v. Duchaire, 3 T. R. 551	376
v. Barrett, 2 Grant's Cas. 73	463	v. Farlow, 75 Ind. 118	633
v. Hanlin, 10 S. & R. 219	722	v. Foote, 13 Rep. 707; 12	
v. Irvine, 9 Wall. 617		Fed. Rep. 37	452, 453 a, 454
31, 33, 38, 45, 56, 60		v. Galloway, 5 Bing. N.	
v. Kirkpatrick, 7 Bell's Ap.		C. 71	15
Cas. 186	256 a	v. Garnsey, 16 Johns. 189	
v. Watson, L. R. 5 Q. B. D.			335, 377
102, 414	811, 945	v. Hudson, 3 Johns. 375	670
Irving v. King, 4 C. & P. 309	582	v. Ins. Co., L. R. 10 C.	
v. Manning, 6 C. B. 391	455	P. 125	305, 323, 886
v. Motly, 7 Bing. 543		v. Ireland, 3 Wend. 99	666
249, 258, 270		v. Jackson, 47 Ga. 99	288
v. Thomas, 18 Me. 418	259, 261	v. Jacoby, 9 Cow. 125	698
v. Veitch, 3 M. & W. 90	774	v. Johnson, 74 N. Y. 607	933
v. Wilson, 4 T. R. 485	149	v. Ketchum, 8 Johns. 479	421
Isaacs v. Ins. Co., L. R. 5 Ex. 296	895	v. Lamphire, 3 Pet. 280	1067
v. Plaster Works, 67 N. Y.		v. Langston, 61 Ga. 392	220
124	886	v. Lawrence, 11 Johns.	
Isberg v. Bowden, 8 Ex. Ch. 852		191	666
1021, 1022, 1027		v. Ligon, 3 Leigh, 161	888
Ish v. Crane, 8 Oh. St. 520; 13		v. Lomas, 4 T. R. 166	380
Oh. St. 576	323	v. Ludeling, 21 Wall. 616	
Isherwood v. Oldknow, 3 M. & S.			161, 376
382	367	v. McGinness, 14 Penn.	
v. Whitmore, 10 M. &		St. 331	285
W. 757; 11 M. & W.		v. Malin, 15 Johns. 293	702
347	916, 983, 987	v. Mayo, 11 Mass. 147	723
Isler v. Baker, 6 Humph. 85	112	v. Phillips, 14 Allen, 539	655
Israel v. Douglass, 1 H. Bl. 239	840	v. R. R., L. R. 7 C. D.	
Ives v. Armstrong, 5 R. I. 567		573	683
888, 892		v. Robinson, 3 Mason,	
v. Bosley, 35 Md. 262	509	138	1021
v. Sterling, 6 Met. 310		v. Robinson, 4 Wend. 436	947
16 b, 528, 808		v. Schoonmaker, 2 Johns.	
Ivey v. Lalland, 42 Miss. 444	445	230	678
		v. Stackhouse, 1 Cow. 122	
J.			1033, 1035
Jack v. Naber, 15 Iowa, 450	206	v. Summerville, 13 Penn.	
v. R. R., 53 Iowa, 399	219, 903	St. 359	283
Jackman v. Mitchell, 13 Ves. 581	380	v. Town, 4 Cow. 599	377
Jackson, ex parte, L. R. 14 Ch. D.		v. Turquand, L. R. 4 H.	
725	379	L. 305	4
v. Allaway, 6 M. & G.		v. Vanderheyden, 17	
942	581	Johns. 167	89
v. Andrews, 7 Wend.		v. Wetherill, 7 S. & R.	
152	421	480	220
v. Baker, 6 Cow. 183	724	Jacob v. Hart, 6 M. & S. 142	705
v. Burchin, 14 Johns.		Jacobs v. Davis, 34 Md. 204	814, 826
124	61, 63	v. Featherstone, 6 W. & S.	
		346	88
		v. Fisher, 1 C. B. 178	776

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Jacomb v. Harwood, 2 Ves. Sen.		Jenkins v. Tucker, 1 H. Bl. 90	759
265	821, 947	v. Walter, 8 Gill & J. 218	726
Jacot v. Emmett, 11 Paige, 142	726	Jenks v. Fritz, 7 W. & S. 201	190
Jacoway v. Denton, 25 Ark. 625	305	Jenkyn v. Vaughan, 3 Drew. 419	377
Jacox v. Jacox, 40 Mich. 473	3, 103	Jenkyns v. Brown, 14 Q. B. 496	878
Jagger Iron Co. v. Walker, 76 N. Y. 521	956	v. Usborne, 7 M. & G. 678	793
James, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 9 Ch. 609	754	Jenner's case, L. R. 7 C. D. 132	26
v. Bank, 17 Ala. 69	207	Jenner v. Jenner, 2 Giff. 233; 2 De G. F. & J. 359	157
v. Bixby, 11 Mass. 34	708	v. Jenner, L. R. 1 Eq. 361	664
v. Burchell, 82 N. Y. 108	558	v. Morris, 3 De G. F. & J. 45	86, 1015
v. Child, 2 Cr. & J. 678	930	Jenners v. Howard, 6 Blackf. 240	118, 121
v. Emery, 8 Taunt. 245	817	Jenness v. Iron Co., 53 Me. 20	2, 4
v. Fulcrood, 5 Tex. 512	443	v. Lane, 26 Me. 475	504, 852, 853, 1003
v. Hodsden, 47 Vt. 127	242, 732	v. Wendell, 51 N. H. 63	748
v. Isaacs, 12 C. B. 791	180, 942	Jennings v. Broughton, 5 D. M. & G. 140	289
v. Le Roy, 6 Johns. 274	730	v. Brown, 9 M. & W. 496	512, 525
v. Morgan, 1 Lev. 111	301	v. Chase, 10 Allen, 526	997
v. O'Driscoll, 2 Bay, 101	757	v. Gage, 13 Ill. 610	285, 291
v. Roberts, 18 Ohio, 548	149	v. Gratz, 3 Rawle, 168	223
v. Vane, 2 R. & E. 883	971	v. Hart, 1 Rus. & Ch. (N. S.) 15	267
v. Williams, 13 M. & W. 828	956	v. Ins. Co., 4 Binn. 244	468
Janvrin v. Exeter, 48 N. H. 83	24	v. McConnell, 17 Ill. 148	161
Jaques v. Millar, L. R. 6 Ch. D. 153	894	v. Mendenhall, 7 Oh. St. 257	986
Jarrett v. Leonard, 2 M. & S. 265	774	v. Rundall, 8 T. R. 335	52, 53
Jarrold v. Moberly, 103 U. S. 580	453	v. Throgmorton, Ry. & M. 251	374
Jarvis v. Rogers, 13 Mass. 105	796	v. Whitaker, 4 Monroe, 50	74
v. Rogers, 15 Mass. 389	1026	Jennison v. Stafford, 1 Cush. 168	532
Jasper v. Ballou, 103 U. S. 745	141	Jessel v. Ins. Co., 3 Hill, 88	837
Jeffery v. M'Taggart, 6 M. & S. 126	841	Jessopp v. Lutwyche, 10 Ex. 614	336, 453
Jefferys v. Fairs, L. R. 4 C. D. 448	193, 252	Jeter v. Haviland, 24 Ga. 252	924
v. Gurr, 2 B. & Ad. 833	759	v. Tucker, 1 S. C. 245	495
v. Jefferys, 1 Cr. & P. 138	495, 682	Jewell v. Cunard, 3 Wood. & M. 277	816, 817
Jefford v. Ringgold, 6 Ala. 544	48 a, 53	v. Wright, 30 N. Y. 259	463
Jeffrey v. Bigelow, 13 Wend. 518	945	Jewett v. Bacon, 6 Mass. 60	990
Jeffries v. Ins. Co., 22 Wall. 47	256	v. Draper, 6 Allen, 434	786 a
v. Lamb, 73 Ind. 202	954	v. Hodgdon, 3 Greenl. 103	695
Jell v. Douglas, 4 B. & Ald. 374	820	v. R. R., 10 Ind. 539	414
Jellison v. Jordan, 68 Me. 373	742	Jewry v. Busk, 5 Taunt. 302	708
Jendwine v. Slade, 2 Esp. 572	259	Jiggitts v. Jiggitts, 40 Miss. 718	399
Jeneson v. Jeneson, 66 Ill. 259	104	Job v. Collier, 11 Ohio, 422	740
Jenkins v. Bradford, 59 Ala. 400	427	Joest v. Williams, 42 Ind. 565	118, 120
v. Frink, 30 Cal. 586	443	Johnassohn v. R. R., 10 Exch. 434	558
v. Hunt, 2 Rand. 446	834	Johns v. Bailey, 45 Iowa, 241	386
v. Jenkins, 12 Iowa, 195	45	v. Fritchey, 39 Md. 258	118, 119
v. Morris, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 674	110		
v. Power, 6 M. & S. 282	350, 939		
v. Pye, 12 Pet. 241	157, 169		
v. Temples, 39 Ga. 655	430, 433, 434		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Johns v. Lantz, 63 Penn. St.	324 513	Johnson v. Sellers, 33 Ala.	265 501
v. Norris, 7 C. C. Green,	102 890	v. Skafte, L. R. 4 Q. B.	700 762
Johnson v. Belden, 47 N. Y.	130 786	v. Steam Packet Co., L.	R. 3 C. P. 38 756, 760, 764
v. Boyles, 26 Ala.	576 495	v. Stephenson, 26 Mich.	63 4
v. Churchill, 49 Iowa,	257 899	v. Stoddard, 100 Mass.	306 877
v. Cleaves, 15 N. H.	332 853, 856, 955	v. Taylor, 4 Dev. L.	355 540
v. Collins, 14 Iowa,	63 785	v. Terry, 34 Conn.	259 400
v. Cummins, 1 C. E.	Green, 97 77	v. Titus, 2 Hill,	606 919
v. Cunningham, 1 Ala.	249 180	v. Trinity Church, 11	Allen, 123 253
v. Dodd, 56 N. Y.	76 180	v. Vail, 1 McCarter (N.	J.), 423 77
v. Dorsey, 7 Gill,	269 518	v. Whittemore, 27 Mich.	463 576
v. Falconer, 2 Paine,	639 476	v. Willis, 7 Gray,	164 383
v. Farley, 45 N. H.	505 677	Johnston v. Brannan, 5 Johns.	268 1001
v. Foster, 12 Met.	167 789	v. Caulkins, 1 Johns.	Cas. 116 312, 885 a
v. Gallagher, 3 De G. F.	& J. 494 77	v. Com., 22 Penn. St.	102 382
v. Goslett, 3 C. B. N. S.	569 520, 742	v. Fessler, 7 Watts,	48 9
v. Harvey, 84 N. Y.	363 765	v. Johnston, 31 Penn.	St. 450 512, 514
v. Holdsworth, 4 Dow.	P. C. 63 821	v. Somerville, 33 N. J.	L. 152 312
v. Hudson, 11 East,	180 364	v. Sumner, 3 H. & N.	261 88
v. Ins. Co., 39 Mich.	33 730	v. U. S., 13 Ct. of Cl.	217 784
v. Irasburgh, 47 Vt.	28 388	v. Usborne, 11 A. & E.	549 637
v. Johnson, 3 B. & P.	162 190, 233, 722, 748, 919	Joll v. Curzon, 4 C. B.	249 824
v. Johnson, 10 Ind.	387 104	Jolly v. Rees, 15 C. B. N. S.	628 84
v. Johnson, 8 Baxt.	261 190	v. Young, 1 Esp.	186 896
v. Jones, 13 Sm. & M.	580 285	Jones v. Adamson, L. R. 1 Ex. D.	60 311
v. Kaiser, 40 N. J. L.	286 1021	v. Arthur, 8 Dowl.	442 977, 985
v. Knapp, 36 Iowa,	616 786, 853	v. Ashburnham, 4 East,	455 532, 585
v. Krassin, 25 Minn.	117 742	v. Austin, 17 Ark.	498 264
v. Lansley, 12 C. B.	468 357, 451	v. Bank, 8 N. Y.	228 24
v. Lines, 6 W. & S.	80 65, 69, 70	v. Barkley, 2 Doug.	684 554, 580
v. Lyttle, L. R. 5 Ch. D.	687 1014, 1030	v. Berry, 33 N. H.	209 364
v. MacDonald, 9 M. &	W. 600 555, 563	v. Bowden, 4 Taunt.	847 910
v. McGehee, 1 Ala.	186 698	v. Brevard, 59 Ala.	499 1022
v. Medlicott, 3 P. Wms.	130 119	v. Bright, 5 Bing.	533 221, 904, 905
v. Pie, 1 Sid.	258; 1 52, 53	v. Broadhurst, 9 C. B.	173 942, 1008
Keb. 905; 1 Lev.	169 221, 223, 905	v. Bullitt, 2 Litt.	49 1006
v. Raylton, L. R. 7 Q. B.	D. 438 221, 223, 905	v. Bunker, 83 N. C.	324 647
v. Reed, 9 Mass.	78 601	v. Carter, 8 Q. B.	134 728
v. Rockwell, 12 Ind.	76 45	v. Carter, 15 M. & W.	718 615

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Jones v. Cliff, 1 C. & M. 541	995	Jones v. R. R., 14 W. Va. 514	603
v. Clifford, L. R. 3 Ch. D.		v. Ransom, 3 Ind. 327	996
779	181, 186, 199, 416	v. Rice, 18 Pick. 440	486, 487
v. Clifton, 101 U. S. 225	91	v. Ricketts, 7 Md. 108	997
v. Cole, 2 Bailey, 330	399	v. Rimmer, L. R. 14 Ch. D.	
v. Cuthbertson, L. R. 8 Q.		588	213, 245, 743
B. 504	77 a	v. Robinson, 1 Exch. 454	
v. Darch, 4 Price, 300	32, 37		815, 826
v. Davids, 4 Russ. 277	765	v. Ryde, 5 Taunt. 488	
v. Davis, 6 Neb. 33	1067		520, 566, 744
v. Dock Co., L. R. 2 Q. B.		v. St. John's Coll., L. R. 6	
D. 314	645	Q. B. 115	311, 594, 1011
v. Downman, 4 Q. B. 235	810 a	v. Sasser, 1 Dev. & B. 452	540
v. Edney, 3 Camp. 285		v. Smith, 48 Barb. 552	984
	186, 187, 214	v. Smith, 14 Ohio, 606	318
v. Etheridge, 6 Port. 208	815	v. Stanly, 76 N. C. 355	812
v. Gibbons, 8 Ex. 920	882	v. Tanner, 7 B. & C. 542	727
v. Gordon, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca.		v. Tapling, 12 C. B. N. S.	
616	539	826	367
v. Gorman, 7 Ired. Eq. 21	340	v. U. S., 7 How. 681	933
v. Guaranty Co., 101 U. S.		v. U. S., 18 Wall. 662	570 a
622	138	v. U. S., 96 U. S. 24	311, 601
v. Heavens, L. R. 4 Ch. D.		v. Waite, 5 Bing. N. C. 341;	
636	433	4 M. & G. 1104	395, 504, 511
v. Herbert, 7 Taunt. 421	821	v. Walker, 2 Paine, 688	854
v. Hoar, 5 Pick. 285	975	v. Watkins, 1 Stew. 81	198
v. Holm, L. R. 2 Ex. 335	328	v. Williams, 7 M. & W. 493	570 a
v. Horner, 60 Penn. St. 214	499	v. Witter, 13 Mass. 304	839, 845
v. How, 9 C. B. 1	298	v. Wood, 16 Penn. St. 25	684
v. Ins. Co., 3 C. B. N. S. 65	256	v. Yates, 9 B. & C. 532	
v. Johnson, 3 W. & S. 276	684		235, 820, 950
v. Jones, 1 C. & M. 721	697	Jones Man. Co. v. Com., 69 Penn.	
v. Jones, L. R. 1 Q. B. D.		St. 137	1065
279	396	Jordan v. Bank, 74 N. Y. 467	1009
v. Jones, 12 Ind. 389	495	v. Black, Meigs, 142	266, 399
v. Jones, 2 Swan (Tenn.),		v. Norton, 4 M. & W. 155	4
605	718	v. Osgood, 109 Mass. 457	
v. Judd, 4 N. Y. 412	305		239, 258
v. Just, L. R. 3 Q. B. 197		v. Parker, 56 Me. 557	291
	221, 223, 224, 905	v. Stevens, 51 Me. 78	
v. Kilgore, 2 Rich. Eq. 63	929		181, 201, 206
v. Lees, 1 H. & N. 189		v. White, 20 Minn. 91	
	430, 433, 436, 442		785, 786 a, 853
v. Lock, L. R. 1 Ch. 25	35, 496	v. Wilkins, 3 Wash. C. C.	
v. Maney, 7 Lea (Tenn.),		110	814, 833
341	924	Jorden v. Money, 5 H. L. C. 185	
v. Marsh, 22 Vt. 144	581		234, 257
v. Mial, 82 N. C. 252	712	Joslin v. Car Co., 7 Vroom, 141	785
v. Morris, 3 Ex. 742	762	v. Cowee, 52 N. Y. 90	288
v. Munroe, 32 Ga. 181	198	Josling v. Kingsford, 13 C. B. N.	
v. North, L. R. 19 Eq. 426	444	S. 447	218, 223
v. Obenchain, 10 Grat. 259	677	Josselyn v. Edwards, 57 Ind. 212	785
v. Owen, 5 Ad. & E. 222	979	Jowett v. Spencer, 1 Exch. 647	553
v. Perkins, 5 B. Mon. 222		Joyce, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 4 Ch. D.	
	103, 104, 109, 119, 121	596	349
v. Perkins, 29 Miss. 139		v. Adams, 4 Seld. 291	317
	853, 1002, 1003	v. Ins. Co., L. R. 7 Q. B.	
v. Phoenix Bank, 4 Seld.		580	652
228	60	v. Swan, 17 C. B. N. S. 84	
v. Plater, 2 Gill, 125	902		4, 877

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Judd v. Day, 50 Iowa, 247	9, 11	Keen v. Monroe, 75 Va. 424	697
v. Fulton, 10 Barb. 117	895	v. Vaughan, 48 Penn. St.	
Judge v. Wilkins, 19 Ala. 765	518	477	935, 1003
Judkins v. Walker, 17 Me. 38	31, 42	Keenan v. Brown, 21 Vt. 86	553
Judson v. Corcoran, 17 How. 612	845	Keene v. Thompson, 4 Gill & J.	
Junction R. R. v. Bank, 12 Wal.		463	960
226	463	Keener v. Bank, 2 Barr, 237	751
Junkins v. Simpson, 14 Me. 364		Keeney v. Good, 21 Penn. St. 349	79
	253, 290	Keening v. Ayling, 126 Mass. 404	608
Justice v. Tallman, 86 Penn. St.		Keep v. Goodrich, 12 Johns. 397	
147	785, 786		2, 523
Juzan v. Toulmin, 9 Ala. 662	245	Keightley v. Watson, 3 Ex. 716	
		817, 826	
		Keim v. Robeson, 23 Penn. St.	
		456	759
		Kein v. Tupper, 52 N. Y. 550	899
		Keir v. Andrade, 6 Taunt. 498	475
		v. Leeman, 6 Q. B. 308; 9	
		Q. B. 371	
		151 a, 415, 483, 484, 486	
		Keith v. Burrows, L. R. 2 C. P.	
		D. 163	805
		v. Clark, 97 U. S. 454	
			1061, 1063
		v. Goodwin, 31 Vt. 268	765
		v. Ins. Co., 52 Ill. 518	
		202, 205, 252, 256	
		Kekewich v. Manning, 1 D. M. G.	
		176	495, 538, 682
		Kelby v. Steel, 5 Esp. 194	765
		Kell v. Charmer, 23 Beav. 195	634
		v. Nainby, 10 B. & C. 20	803
		Keller v. State, 11 Md. 525	363
		v. State, 51 Ind. 111	257
		Kelley v. Caplice, 23 Kan. 474	518
		v. Case, 18 Hun, 472	91
		v. Davis, 49 N. H. 187	64
		v. People, 55 N. Y. 565	344
		Kellogg v. Barnard, 6 Blatch.	
		279; 10 Wall. 383	915
		v. Gilbert, 10 Johns. 220	944
		v. Miller, 2 McCrary, 395	
		337, 462	
		v. Olmsted, 25 N. Y. 189	499
		v. Richards, 14 Weld.	
		116	
		504, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1006	
		v. Steiner, 29 Wis. 626	264
		v. Stockton, 29 Penn. St.	
		460	570
		v. Turpie, 2 Ill. Ap. 55;	
		93 Ill. 265	290
		Kelly, in re, 39 Conn. 159	24
		Kelly's Appeal, 77 Penn. St. 236	91
		Kelly v. Allen, 34 Ala. 663	259
		v. Devlin, 58 How. Pr. 487	403
		v. Drury, 9 Allen, 27	1068
		v. Evans, 3 Pen. & W. 387	723
		v. Page, 7 Gray, 213	765
		v. Pember, 35 Vt. 183	282

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Kelly v. Solari, 9 M. & W. 54		Kensington v. Phillips, 5 Dow. 61	3
181, 190, 198, 199, 752, 753		Kent v. Freehold Land Co., L. R.	
Kelmer v. Smith, 77 N. Y. 226		3 Ch. 493	291
205, 206		v. Mining Co., 78 N. Y. 159	139
Kelsey v. Hobby, 16 Pet. 269	148, 150	v. Ricards, 3 Md. Ch. 392	944
Kelson v. Kelson, 10 Hare, 385	540	v. Riley, L. R. 14 Eq. 190	377
Kemmil v. Wilson, 4 Wash. C. C.		Kenton v. R. R., 54 Penn. St. 401	139
308	954	Kenton Co. v. Bank Lick Co., 10	
Kemp v. Balls, 10 Ex. 607	942	Bush, 529	337
v. Finden, 12 M. & W. 421		Kenworthy v. Sawyer, 125 Mass.	
765, 835		28	79
v. Humphreys, 13 Ill. 573	889	v. Stringer, 27 Ind.	
v. Ice Co., 69 N. Y. 45	311	498	405
v. Tucker, L. R. 8 Ch. 369	1013	Kenyon v. Farria, 47 Conn. 510	86
v. Watt, 15 M. & W. 672	1004	v. Smith, 24 Ind. 11	654
Kempner v. Churchill, 8 Wall.		v. Williams, 19 Ind. 44	810 a
362	376	Keough v. Foreman, 33 La. An.	
Kempson v. Ashbee, L. R. 10 Ch.		1434	118
15	161, 163, 168	Kepner v. Keefer, 6 Watts, 231	382
v. Saunders, 4 Bing. 5	742	Ker v. Osborne, 9 East, 378	723
Kenan v. Holloway, 16 Ala. 53	759	Kern v. Thurber, 57 Ga. 172	291
Kendall v. Hamilton, L. R. 3 Ap.		Kerr v. Bell, 44 Mo. 120	47, 48
Ca. 403	860	v. Exchange Co., 3 Edw. 315	318
v. Lawrence, 22 Pick. 540		v. Shrader, 1 Weekly Notes,	
31, 38		33	899
v. May, 10 Allen, 59		Kerrison v. Cole, 8 East, 231	338, 606
101, 106, 121		Kershaw v. Kelsey, 100 Mass. 561	
Kennard v. George, 44 N. H. 440	199	473, 478	
Kennaway v. Treleavan, 5 M. &		v. Kirkpatrick, L. R. 3	
W. 498	2, 524, 710	Ap. Cas. 345	923
Kennedy v. Brown, 13 C. B. N. S.		Kerst v. Ginder, 1 Pittsb. 314	285
677	428, 778	Kesner v. Trigg, 98 U. S. 50	91
v. Carpenter, 2 Whart.		Ketchum v. Stout, 20 Ohio, 453	902
344	761	Kettle v. Eliot, Rolle Ab. I. 731,	
v. Doyle, 10 Allen, 161		K. ; 2 Bulst. 69; Cro. Jac. 320	49
31, 36		Kevan v. Crawford, L. R. 6 C. D.	
v. Gad, 3 C. & P. 376	450	29	537
v. Green, 3 M. & K. 699		Key v. Davis, 1 Md. 32	107
185, 939		Keyser v. Rice, 47 Md. 203	843
v. Hughey, 3 Watts,		Kibbe v. Ins. Co., 11 Gray, 163	131
265	751	Kidder v. Blake, 45 N. H. 530	532
v. Ins. Co., 3 Har. & J.		v. Chamberlin, 41 Vt. 62	518
367	128	v. Kidder, 33 Penn. St. 268	
v. Knight, 21 Wis. 340	463	496, 1	
v. Lee, 3 Meriv. 440	18	v. Norris, 18 N. H. 532	930
v. McKay, 43 N. J. L. 288		Kidney v. Stoddard, 7 Met. 252	
270, 279		249, 262	
v. Palmer, 6 Gray, 316	885	Kiefer v. Rogers, 19 Minn. 32	245, 285
v. Panama Mail Co., L.		Kiester v. Miller, 25 Penn. St.	
R. 2 Q. B. 580		481	523
187, 189, 194, 744		Kiewert v. Rindskopf, 46 Wis.	
v. Rose, 25 Penn. St. 256	665	481	151, 354, 737, 741
v. Ware, 1 Barr, 445		Kihlberg v. U. S., 97 U. S. 398	593
512, 1001		Kilborn v. Field, 78 Penn. St. 194	394
Kenner v. Harding, 85 Ill. 264		Kiley v. Forsee, 57 Mo. 390	128
219, 224, 260		Kilgore v. Emmitt, 33 Oh. St. 410	566
Kennett v. Chambers, 14 How. 38	344	Killiam v. Badgett, 27 Ark. 166	
Kenney v. Hoffman, 31 Grat. 442		103, 158	
214, 282		Killinger v. Reidenhauer, 6 S. &	
Kensington v. Inglis, 8 East, 273	475	R. 531	399

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Kilpatrick v. Bridge Co., 49 Penn. St. 118	720	Kingsley v. Wallis, 14 Me. 57	919
Kimball v. Cunningham, 4 Mass. 502	285	Kingston v. Kingston, 11 M. & W. 233	961, 980
v. Ins. Co., 8 Gray, 33	338 a	Kingston Bk. v. Eltinge, 40 N. Y. 391	196, 753
v. Ins. Co., 9 Allen, 540	258	Kinkead, in re, 3 Biss. 405	77
v. Leland, 110 Mass. 325	494	Kinney v. Kiernan, 2 Lans. 492	282
v. Ship Anna Kimball, 2 Cliff. 4	956	v. McDermot, 55 Iowa, 674	382, 383, 384
Kimbell v. Moreland, 55 Ga. 164	214	Kinsler v. McCants, 4 Rich. 46	820
Kimber v. Barber, L. R. 8 Ch. Ap. 56	161	v. Pope, 5 Strobb. 126	999
Kimbrough v. Lane, 11 Bush, 556	338, 483	Kinsman v. Parkhurst, 18 How. 289	357, 436
Kimm v. Weippert, 46 Mo. 532	77	Kintrea, ex parte, L. R. 5 Ch. 95	246
Kimmel's App., 91 Penn. St. 471	696	Kintzing v. McElrath, 5 Barr, 467	249, 250, 251, 252
Kincaid v. Brunswick, 2 Fairf. 188	982	Kirby v. Marlborough, 2 M. & S. 18	924, 929
v. Eaton, 98 Mass. 139	24	v. Studebaker, 15 Ind. 45	570
Kincheloe v. Holmes, 7 B. Mon. 5	570	v. Taylor, 6 Johns. Ch. 242	161
Kinder v. Shaw, 2 Mass. 398	734	v. Watt, 19 Ill. 393	778
King v. Andrews, 30 Ind. 429	923	Kirk, ex parte, L. R. 5 C. D. 800	1037
v. Basingham, 8 Mod. 199	77 a	v. Hartman, 63 Penn. St. 97	612, 658, 718
v. Cotton, 2 P. Wms. 674	399	v. Nice, 2 Watts, 367	220
v. Diehl, 9 S. & R. 409	1013	Kirkland v. Oates, 25 Ala. 465	580
v. Dowdall, 2 Sandf. 131	897	Kirkman v. Bank, 2 Cold. 397	679
v. Eagle Mills, 10 Allen, 548	214	Kirkpatrick v. Bonsall, 72 Penn. St. 155	453, 453 a
v. Hamlet, 2 My. & K. 456	169	v. Houston, 4 W. & S. 115	470
v. Hoare, 13 M. & W. 494	805, 825, 827,	Kirkstall Co. v. R. R., L. R. 9 Q. B. 468	271, 274
v. Humphreys, 10 Barr, 217	714	Kirtland v. Hotchkiss, 100 U. S. 491	843
v. Ins. Co., 57 Ala. 118	467	Kirton v. Braithwaite, 1 M. & W. 310	944, 972, 980, 982
v. King, 1 M. & K. 442	286	Kirwan v. Kirwan, 2 C. & M. 617	862, 863
v. Moon, 42 Mo. 551	239, 377	Kisch v. R. R., 3 De G. J. & S. 122; L. R. 2 H. L. 99	245
v. Paddock, 18 Johns. 141	76	Kisterbock's App., 51 Penn. St. 483	235
v. Rea, 56 Ind. 1	89	Kitchen v. Campbell, 3 Wilson, 304	739
v. Ruckman, 5 C. E. Green, 316; 6 C. E. Green, 599	3, 888, 892	v. Lee, 11 Paige, 107	48 a, 56
v. Sears, 2 C. M. & R. 48	511	v. R. R., 59 Mo. 514	128
v. Thompson, 87 Penn. St. 365	76	Kitchin v. Hawkins, L. R. 2 C. P. 31	923
v. Upton, 4 Me. 387	532	Klein v. Caldwell, 91 Penn. St. 140	89
v. Welcome, 5 Gray, 41	711	v. French, 57 Miss. 662	843
v. Winants, 71 N. C. 469	349	Kline's Estate, 64 Penn. St. 122	161, 256 a, 399
v. Wise, 43 Cal. 628	161	Kline v. Baker, 99 Mass. 253	258
King Philip Mills v. Slater, 12 R. I. 82	580	v. Beebe, 6 Conn. 494	31, 36, 56, 59, 60, 63
Kingdom v. Cox, 5 C. B. 522	553	v. Cptter, 34 N. J. Eq. 329	312, 603
Kingsbury v. Flemming, 66 N. C. 524	354	v. Kline, 57 Penn. St. 120	161, 256 a, 399
v. Kirwan, 77 N. Y. 612	453		
Kingsford v. Merry, 1 H. & N. 503; rev'g 11 Exch. 577	291, 292		
v. Swinford, 28 L. J. C. 413	1013		
Kingsland v. Pryor, 33 Oh. St. 19	247		
Kingsley v. Davis, 104 Mass. 178	184		

TABLE OF CASES.

SECTION		SECTION	
Kline v. L'Amoureux, 2 Paige, 419	70	Kollock v. Parcher, 52 Wis.	393
v. Raymond, 70 Ind.	271	Koontz v. Ins. Co., 42 Mo.	126
Klohs v. Klohs, 61 Penn. St.	245	Kortright v. Cady, 21 N. Y.	343
	118, 123	Koshkoning v. Burton, 104 U. S.	668
Kloppenstein v. Mulcahy, 4 Nev.	296		1067
	242	Kost v. Bender, 25 Mich.	515
Knapp v. Hobbs, 50 N. H.	476	Kostenbader v. Peters, 80 Penn.	438
	722, 723		205, 208
v. Hoyt, Sup. Ct. Iowa,		v. Spotts, 80 Penn.	430
1881; 13 Rep.	496		199, 367
v. Lee, 3 Pick.	452	Kottwitz v. Alexander, 34 Tex.	689
v. Maltby, 13 Wend.	587		343
Kneedler's Appeal, 92 Penn. St.	428	Kountz v. Holthouse, 85 Penn. St.	235
	123		785, 803
Knight v. Abbott, 30 Vt.	577	v. Kennedy, 63 Penn. St.	187
v. Bean, 22 Me.	531		695, 696
	322, 323, 547	Kramer v. Cook, 7 Gray,	550
v. Bowyer, 2 De G. & J.	421		311
	426	Kreiter v. Bomberger, 82 Penn.	59
v. Clements, 8 Ad. & El.	215		668, 669, 902
	698	Kribs v. Jones, 44 Md.	396
v. Faith, 15 Q. B.	649		311, 547
v. Heath, 23 N. H.	410	Kromer v. Heim, 75 N. Y.	574
	239, 377		999, 1003
v. Houghtalling, 85 N. C.	17	Krumbhaar v. Birch, 83 Penn. St.	426
	286, 290		231
v. Hughes, 3 C. & P.	467	Kruse v. Steffens, 47 Ill.	112
v. R. R., 70 Mo.	231		378
	608	Krutsinger v. Brown, 72 Ind.	466
v. Thayer, 125 Mass.	25		955
v. Worsted Co., 2 Cush.	271	Kuelkamp v. Hidding, 31 Wis.	503
	553, 554, 579, 708		232
Knights v. Wiffen, L. R. 5 Q. B.	660	Kugler v. Wiseman, 20 Ohio,	361
	670		602, 603
Knill v. Williams, 10 East,	431	Kyle v. Kavanagh, 103 Mass.	356
	700, 705		4, 186, 207
Knisely v. Shenberger, 7 Watts,	193		L.
	825, 826	Labouchere v. Dawson, L. R. 13	
Knolls v. Barnhart, 71 N. Y.	474	Eq. 322; 25 L. T., N. S.	894
Knotts v. Preble, 50 Ill.	226		435
	535	Lackey v. Mercer Co., 9 Barr,	318
v. Stearns, 91 U. S.	638		738
Knoup v. Piqua Bank, 1 Ohio St.	603; rev'd, 16 How.	Lacy v. Kynaston, 2 Salk.	575
	369		1036
Knowles v. Dabney, 105 Mass.	437	v. Lumber Co., 43 Iowa,	510
	306		810 a
v. Haughton, 11 Ves.	168	Ladd v. Dillingham, 34 Me.	316
v. Michel, 13 East,	249		338, 339, 509
Knowlton v. Spring Co., 57 N. Y.	518; 14 Blatch.		589
	364	v. Moore, 3 Sandf.	589
Knox v. Lee, 12 Wall.	457		285
	984	v. Pleasants, 39 Tex.	415
v. Martin, 8 N. H.	154		190
Knox Co. Bk. v. Cottey, 70 Me.	150	Ladies' Collegiate Institute v.	
	826	French, 16 Gray,	196
Knoxboro Church v. Beach, 74 N.	Y. 72		528
	528	La Farge v. Kneeland, 7 Cow.	455
Knuckolls v. Lea, 10 Humph.	577		755
Knye v. Moore, 1 Sim. & St.	61; 2 Sim. & St.	Lafond v. Deems, 81 N. Y.	507
	260		416
Koehler v. Iron Co., 2 Black,	715	Lagay v. Marston. 32 La. An.	170
	128, 134		111, 123
Kohn v. Schooner Renaissance, 5	La. An. 25	La Grange v. Tel. Co., 25 La. An.	383
	445		791
		Laidlaw v. Organ, 2 Wheat.	178
			248, 250, 251, 252, 254
		Laing v. Fidgeon, 4 Camp.	169;
		6 Taunt. 108	223, 904, 905
		v. Meader, 1 C. & P.	257
			977

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Laing v. Reed, L. R. 5 Ch. 4	135	Lane v. Shackford, 5 N. H. 130	711
Lair v. Hunsicker, 28 Penn. St. 115	799	v. Smith, 68 Me. 178	730
Laird v. Pim, 7 M. & W. 474	581, 602	v. Steward, 20 Me. 98	573
v. Scott, 5 Heisk. 314	377	Lang v. Gale, 1 M. & S. 111	896
Lake v. Meacham, 13 Wis. 355	208	v. Keppele, 1 Binn. 123	832
Lake Ontario Shore R. R. v. Curtiss, 80 N. Y. 219	785	v. Whidden, 2 N. H. 435	100, 114
Lakeman v. Pollard, 43 Me. 463	300, 322, 714	Langabier v. Fairbury, 64 Ill. 243	382
Lamar v. Brown, 56 Ala. 157	700	Langdon v. Goole, 3 Lev. 21	210
Lamare v. Dixon, L. R. 6 H. L. 414	249, 257	v. Gray, 52 How. Pr. 387	338
Lamb's case, 5 Co. 23 b	321	v. Paul, 20 Vt. 217	695, 700
Lamb v. Bunce, 4 M. & S. 275	7, 756	Lange v. Werk, 2 Ohio St. 519	338, 430, 431, 433
v. Crafts, 12 Met. 353	212, 224, 561	Langford v. Frey, 8 Hump. 443	36
v. Goodwin, 10 Ired. 320	1000	Langhorn v. Cologan, 4 Taunt. 330	701
v. Harris, 8 Ga. 546	196, 753	Langley v. Sturtevant, 7 Pick. 214	724
v. Lathrop, 13 Wend. 95	990, 993	Langlois v. Crawford, 59 Mo. 456	202, 803
Lambert v. Fuller, 88 Ill. 260	597, 600	Langridge v. Levy, 2 M. & W. 519; 4 M. & W. 337	228, 237, 812
Lamberton v. Hogan, 2 Barr, 22	1061	Langstaffe v. Fenwick, 10 Ves. 405	533
Lamborn v. Commis., 97 U. S. 181	198, 754	Langton v. Carleton, C. R. 9 Ex. 57	718
Lamburn v. Cruden, 2 M. & G. 253	716	v. Hughes, 1 M. & S. 593	342, 343
Lamego v. Gould, 2 Burr. 715	468	Lanier v. Auld, 1 Murph. 138	250
Lamerson v. Marvin, 8 Barb. 1	230	v. Trigg, 6 Sm. & M. 641	981
Lamert v. Heath, 15 M. & W. 486	520, 562, 746, 749	Lankton v. Stewart, 27 Minn. 346	997
Lamm v. Port Deposit Co., 49 Md. 233	130, 232 a, 270	Lanning v. Carpenter, 48 N. Y. 408	198, 199
L'Amoureux v. Gould, 3 Seld. 349	500	Lansdowne v. Lansdowne, Mosley, 364; 2 Jac. & W. 205	199
L'Amoureux v. Crosby, 2 Paige, 422	123	Lansing v. Muscatine Co., 12 Int. Rev. Rec. 56; 1 Dillon, 522	1063
Lampleigh v. Braithwait, Hob. 105; 1 Smith's L. C. 7th Am. ed. 280	514, 708, 809	Lantz v. Frey, 14 Penn. St. 201	719
Lampon v. Corke, 5 B. & Ald. 606	938	Lapeyre v. United States, 17 Wall. 191	885
Lamprell v. Billericay Union, 3 Ex. 283	594, 930	Lapham v. Green, 9 Vt. 407	784, 818
Lancashire R. R. v. Gidlow, L. R. 7 H. L. 517	738	Lapice v. Smith, 13 La. 91	463
Lancaster v. Dolan, 1 Rawle, 231	77	Large v. Passmore, 5 S. & R. 51	467
Lancaster Co. Bank v. Moore, 78 Penn. St. 407	106, 108	Larkins v. Biddle, 21 Ala. 252	199
Lancey v. Ins. Co., 56 Me. 562	803	Larmon v. Jordan, 56 Ill. 204	13
Land Credit Co. v. Fermoy, L. R. 5 Ch. 323	832	Larned v. Andrews, 106 Mass. 435	364
Landa v. Obert, 45 Tex. 539	150	Larry v. Sherburne, 2 Allen, 34	252
Landers v. Miller, Court of App. Ky. 1881	91	Larsen v. Burke, 39 Iowa, 703	205
Lane v. Drinkwater, 1 C. M. & R. 599	816	La Rue v. Gilkyson, 4 Barr, 375	101, 106, 108
v. Goodwin, 4 Q. B. 361	265	Latapee v. Pecholier, 2 Wash. C. C. 180	997
v. Hill, 18 Q. B. 252	779	Laterrado v. Kaiser, 15 La. An. 296	149
v. McKeen, 15 Me. 304	84	Latham v. Udell, 38 Mich. 238	107 a, 677, 679
		Lathrop v. Amherst Bank, 9 Metc. 489	421, 422, 427

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Lathrop v. Knapp, 27 Wis. 214	528	Lea v. Hopkins, 7 Barr, 492	382
v. Page, 129 Mass. 19	997	Leabo v. Goode, 67 Mo. 126	860
Latimer v. Glenn, 2 Bush, 535	91, 537	Leach v. Duvall, 8 Bush, 201	266, 399
Laton v. King, 19 N. H. 280	42, 717	v. Fobes, 11 Gray, 506	533
Latt v. Booth, 3 C. & K. 292	36, 67	v. French, 69 Me. 389	708
Lattimore v. Harsen, 14 Johns.	500	v. Greene, 116 Mass. 534	841
330	500	v. Lambeth, 14 Ark. 668	1021
Laubenheimer v. Mann, 17 Wis.	433	Leadbetter v. Ins. Co., 13 Me.	593
542	433	265	593
Lauer v. Lee, 42 Penn. St. 165	285	League v. De Young, 11 How.	1061
Lavassar v. Washburne, 50 Wis.	208, 282	185	1061
200	208, 282	v. Waring 85 Penn. St.	954, 956
Lavery v. Turley, 6 H. & N. 239	996	244	954, 956
Law v. Grant, 37 Wis. 548	252, 270	Leaming v. Wise, 73 Penn. St.	284
v. Hatcher, 4 Blackf. 364	793	173	284
v. Henry, 39 Ind. 414	606	Leard v. Smith, 44 N. Y. 618	890
v. Jackson, 9 Cow. 641	971, 972, 973	Learned v. Bellows, 8 Vt. 79	1035
v. Law, 3 P. Wms. 391	398	Leary v. Cheshire, 3 Jones' Eq.	765
v. Long, 41 Ind. 586	31	170	765
v. Sutherland, 5 Grat. 357	931	Leas v. James, 10 S. & R. 307	954
Lawes v. Purser, 6 E. & B. 930	748	v. Patterson, 38 Ind. 465	326
Lawley v. Hooper, 3 Atk. 278	468	Leask v. Scott, L. R. 2 Q. B. D.	291, 793
Lawrence v. Dale, 3 John. Ch. 23	290	376	291, 793
v. Dougherty, 5 Yerg.	435, 619, 623, 891	Leather Cloth Co. v. Hieronimus,	870, 877
v. Fox, 20 N. Y. 268	785, 786 a	L. R. 10 Q. B. 140	870, 877
v. Gullifer, 38 Me. 532	717	Leather Cloth Co. v. Lonsont, 21	430, 431, 433, 436
v. Hand, 23 Miss. 103	270	L. T. N. S. 661; L. R. 9 Eq.	430, 431, 433, 436
v. Kidder, 10 Barb. 641	433, 434	345	430, 431, 433, 436
v. McArter, 10 Ohio, 37	39	Leatherdale v. Sweepstone, 3 C. &	983
v. McCalmont, 2 How.	426, 505, 517	P. 342	983
v. Miller, 86 N. Y. 131	870, 901	Leavenworth Bk. v. Smoot, 2	462
v. Minturn, 17 How.	100, 792	MacAr. 371	462
v. Nelson, 21 N. Y. 158	1026	Leavitt v. Blatchford, 5 Barb. 9	338
v. Walmsley, 12 C. B.	570 a	v. La Force, 71 Mo. 353	254
N. S. 799	570 a	v. Leavitt, 13 Mich. 452	265
Laws v. Rand, 3 C. B. N. S. 442	893	v. Morrow, 6 Ohio St. 71	1008
Lawson v. Lovejoy, 8 Greenl. 405	36	v. Palmer, 3 N. Y. 19	338
Lawton v. Buckingham, 15 Iowa,	495	Leaycraft v. Hedden, 3 Green Ch.	77
v. Kittredge, 30 N. H.	500, 260	512	77
v. Maner, 9 Rich. L. 335	570	Leazure v. Hillegas, 7 S. & R. 313	142
Laycock v. Pickles, 4 B. & S. 497	780, 930	Leballister v. Nash, 24 Me. 316	987, 990
Laythoarp v. Bryant, 3 Scott, 238	516	987, 990	987, 990
Layton v. Pearce, 1 Dougl. 15	620	Lebanon Bk. v. Karmany, Sup.	1016
Lazarus v. Cowie, 3 Q. B. 459	942	Ct. Penn. 1881; 12 Rep. 540	1016
v. Ins. Co., 5 Pick. 76	788	Le Blanche v. R. R., L. R. 1 C. P.	25
v. Shearer, 2 Ala. N. S.	718, 810 a	D. 286	25
Lazell v. Miller, 15 Mass, 207	197	Lecatt v. Sallee, 3 Port. 115	427
v. Pinnick, 1 Tyler, 247	115	Lecky v. McDermott, 8 S. & R.	292
Lea v. Cassen, 61 Ala. 312	354, 741	500	292
		Le Conteulx v. Buffalo, 33 N. Y.	140
		333	140
		Ledwich v. McKim, 53 N. Y. 307	744
		Ledyard v. Phillips, 32 Mich. 13	199
		Lee v. Alexander, 9 B. Mon. 25	702
		v. Bayes, 18 C. B. 599	736
		v. Cass, 1 Taunt. 511	467
		v. Early, 44 Md. 80	923
		v. Griffin, 1 B. & S. 272	12, 714
		v. Ins. Co., 3 Gray, 583	196, 338 a

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Lee v. Jones, 14 C. B. N. S. 386 ;		Leichtweiss v. Treskow, 21 Hun,	
17 C. B. N. S. 482	232, 248, 254	487	73
v. Kirby, 104 Mass.	420	Leidig v. Coover, 47 Penn. St.	
	166, 516, 517	534	719
v. Lee, L. R. 4 C. D. 175	663	Leigh v. Lillie, 6 H. & N. 165	620, 869
r. Lee, 19 Mo. 420	267	v. Patterson, 8 Taunt. 540	885
v. Lester, 7 C. B. 1008	1019	Lemere v. Elliott, 6 H. & N. 656	778
v. Muggeridge, 5 Taunt. 36		Lemon v. Grosskopf, 22 Wis. 447	725
	512, 513	v. Jenkins, 48 Ga. 313	110
v. Oppenheimer, 32 Me. 253		Lenhart v. Ream, 74 Penn. St. 59	48
	997, 1003	Lenheim v. Wilmarding, 55 Penn.	
v. R. R., L. R. 6 Ch. 527		St. 73	539
	495, 938	Lennon v. Napper, 2 Sch. & L.	
v. R. R., L. R. 6 C. P. 576	360	682	203
v. Starbird, 55 Me. 491	700	Le Noir v. Bristow, 4 Camp. 134	1011
v. State, 51 Miss. 665	321	Lent v. Padelford, 10 Mass. 230	
v. Stiger, 30 N. J. Eq. 610	469		532, 571
v. Stuart, 2 Leigh, 76	198	Lenzberg's Policy, in re, L. R. 7	
Leech v. Harris, 2 Brewst. 571	416	Ch. D. 650	353
v. Hill, 4 Watts, 448	570 a	Leonard v. Bates, 1 Blackf. 172	495
Leeds v. Burrows, 12 East, 1	964	v. Dyer, 26 Conn. 172	323
v. Cheetham, 1 Sim. 146	318	v. Fowler, 44 N. Y. 289	
v. Ins. Co., 6 Wheat. 565	184		225, 917
v. Vail, 15 Penn. St. 185	84	v. Leonard, 2 B. & B.	
Leeds R. R. v. Fearnley, 4 Exch.		171	199, 256 a
26	40	v. Leonard, 14 Pick. 280	123
Leek v. Cowley, 10 S. & R. 176	181	v. Tel. Co., 41 N. Y. 544	27
Leeming v. Snaith, 16 Q. B. 275		v. Vredenburg, 8 Johns.	
	215, 902	29	517, 536, 540
Lees v. Nuttall, 2 Myl. & K. 819	378	Leopold v. Van Kirke, 27 Wis.	
v. Whitcomb, 5 Bing. 34	2	152	221
Lefavour v. Ins. Co., 1 Phila. 558	256	Lepper v. Nuttman, 35 Ind. 384	291
Leffingwell v. White, 1 Johns. Ca.		Lesassier v. The Southwestern, 2	
99	896	Woods, 35	878
Lefils v. Sugg, 15 Ark. 137	69	Leslie v. Fitzpatrick, L. R. 3 Q.	
Leftley v. Mills, 4 T. R. 170	884	B. D. 229	42
Leger v. Bonnaffé, 2 Barb. 475	298	Lestapies v. Ingraham, 5 Barr, 71	
Leggate v. Clark, 111 Mass. 308	123		343, 357, 725
Legge v. Harlock, 12 Q. B. 1015	1029	Lester v. Garland, 15 Ves. 248	895
Leggett v. Bank, 1 N. J. Eq. 541	130	v. Mahan, 25 Ala. 445	165
v. Buckhalter, 30 Miss.		Lenty v. Hillas, 2 De G. & J. 110	196
421	205	Levering v. Heighe, 2 Md. Ch. 81	36
Leggott v. Barrett, 43 L. T. N. S.		v. Levering, 3 Md. Ch.	
641 ; L. R. 15 Ch. D. 306	435	365	36
Legh v. Legh, 1 B. & P. 447	526	Levey v. Dyess, 51 Miss. 501	318
Lehigh Coal Co. v. Harlan, 27		Levi v. Levi, 6 C. & P. 239	268, 443
Penn. St. 429	653	Levick v. Brotherline, 74 Penn.	
Lehigh Valley R. R. v. McFarlan,		St. 149	238, 377
31 N. J. Eq. 706	1061	Levita's case, L. R. 3 Ch. 36	17
Lehman v. Kelly, Sup. Ct. Ala.		Levy v. Bank, 4 Dall. 234	250
1881 ; 12 Rep. 424	377	v. Burgess, 64 N. Y. 390	601
v. Schackelford, 50 Ala.		v. Cohen, 4 Ga. 1	18
437	149	v. Gadsby, 3 Cranch, 180	647
v. Strassberger, 2 Woods,		v. Gray, 56 Miss. 318	89
554	453	v. Green, 8 E. & B. 575 ; 1	
Lehmann v. McArthur, L. R. 3 Ch.		E. & B. 969	190, 898
496	591	v. Langridge, 4 M. & W.	
Lehow v. Simonton, 3 Col. 346	785	337	228, 812
Lehr v. Taylor, 91 Penn. St. 381	1013	v. Levy, 78 Penn. St. 507	841
Leicester v. Rose, 4 East, 372	380	v. Loeb, 85 N. Y. 365	558

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Levystein v. Whitman, 59 Ala.		Lightly v. Clouston, 1 Taunt. 112	730
345	923, 924	Lighty v. Brenner, 14 S. & R.	
Lewis v. Alexander, 51 Tex. 578		127	797
	343, 473	Like v. Thompson, 9 Barb. 315	729
v. Bannister, 16 Gray, 500	144	Lillard v. Bank, 3 How. (Miss.) 78	833
v. Bingham, 4 B. & Ald.		v. Ruckers, 9 Yerg. 64	823
672	697	Lilley v. Elwin, 11 Q. B. 742	718
v. Brass, L. R. 3 Q. B. D.		v. Hewitt, 11 Price, 494	570 a
667	5	Lilly v. Hays, 5 A. & E. 548	
v. Brewster, 57 Penn. St.			728, 794
410	540, 683	v. Waggoner, 27 Ill. 395	109
v. Browning, 130 Mass. 173		Limerick Academy v. Davis, 11	
	18, 27	Mass. 113	528
v. Campbell, 8 C. B. 541	708	Lincoln v. Buckmaster, 32 Vt. 652	
v. Davison, 4 M. & W. 654			101, 105
	337, 511, 654	v. Claflin, 7 Wall. 132	
v. Hilman, 3 H. L. C. 607	161		239, 377
v. Ins. Co., 10 Gray, 508	256	v. Erie Co., Sup. Ct. Mass.	
v. Ins. Co., 61 Mo. 534	323	1882	3
v. Jones, 4 B. & C. 506		v. Rowe, 51 Mo. 571	77
	264, 504, 997	Lincoln College's case, 3 Co. Rep.	
v. Knox, 2 Bibb. 453	407	58 b	28
v. Kramer, 3 Md. 265	700	Lindeman v. Rosenfield, 67 Ind.	
v. Lewis, 47 Penn. St. 127	1067	246	954
v. Lewis, 3 Strobh. 530	763	Lindenau v. Desborough, 3 Man.	
v. Lewis, 15 Ohio, 715	427	& R. 45; 8 B. & C. 586	246, 256
v. Lewis, 5 Oregon, 169	196	Lindsay v. Cundy, L. R. 1 Q. B. D.	
v. Littlefield, 15 Me. 233		348; 2 Q. B. D. 96	
	53, 452		183, 292, 734
v. Ludwick, 6 Cold. 368	319	v. Smith, 78 N. C. 328	488
v. Lyman, 22 Pick. 437	298	Lindsay Petroleum Co. v. Hurd,	
v. Lyster, 2 C. M. & R. 704	957	L. R. 5 P. C. 221	
v. McNatt, 65 N. C. 63	822		259, 260, 284, 286, 289
v. Payn, 8 Cow. 71	695, 702	Lindsey v. Gordon, 13 Me. 60	891
v. Pease, 85 Ill. 31	927, 929	v. Lindsey, 50 Ill. 79	158
v. Robinson, 10 Watts, 338	736	v. Lindsey, 34 Miss. 432	
v. Rucker, 2 Burr. 1167	455		213, 224
v. Seabury, 74 N. Y. 409	505	v. Stevens, 5 Dana, 104	924
v. Simons, 1 Handy, 82	513	v. Veasy, 62 Ala. 421	
v. Webber, 116 Mass. 450	938		214, 247, 282
v. Welch, 14 N. H. 294	364	Lindsley v. Ferguson, 49 N. Y. 625	
v. Yale, 4 Fla. 418	77		283, 742
Lexington v. Butler, 14 Wall. 282		Lindus v. Bradwell, 5 C. B. 582	84
	137, 138, 143	v. Melrose, 3 H. & N. 177	
v. Clarke, 2 Vent. 223	338		670, 810 a
Libby v. Hopkins, 104 U. S. 303;		Line v. Nelson, 9 Vroom, 358	504
25 A. L. J. 153	924, 1017	v. Stephenson, 5 Bing. N. C.	
Libhart v. Wood, 1 W. & S. 265	717	183	632
Licey v. Licey, 7 Barr, 251	797	Lineker v. Ayesford, 1 Cal. 75	793
Lichfield v. Green, 1 H. & N. 884		Link v. Clemmens, 7 Blackf. 479	382
	935, 957	Linker v. Linker, 32 N. J. Eq.	
Lickbarrow v. Mason, 2 T. R. 63	793	174	91
Lidderdale v. Robinson, 2 Brock.		v. Smith, 4 Wash. C. C.	
159	765	224	399
Lidgett v. Secretan, L. R. 6 C. P.		Linn v. Ross, 10 Ohio, 412	311, 318
616	455	v. Sigsbee, 67 Ill. 75	433, 434
Ligeois v. McCrackan, 13 Rep.		Linnegar v. Hodd, 5 C. B. 437	
298; 10 Fed. Rep. 664	373		525, 532
Lightfoot v. Tenant, 1 B. & P. 551		Linscott v. Fernald, 5 Greenl. 496	633
	342, 445	Linsley, ex parte, L. R. 9 Ch. 290	379

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Linton v. Porter, 31 Ill. 107	231	Lloyd v. Guibert, L. R. 1 Q. B.	
Lippincott v. Mitchell, 94 U. S.		115	315, 764
767	77	v. Johnson, 1 B. & P. 340	374
Lister v. Clark, 48 Iowa, 168	852	v. Leisenring, 7 Watts, 294	452
v. Hodgson, L. R. 4 Eq. 30	495	v. Pughe, L. R. 8 Ch. 88	77 a
Litchfield v. Garratt, 10 Mich. 426	784	v. Scott, 4 Pet. 205	138, 461
v. Hutchinson, 117 Mass.		v. Turner, 5 Sawyer, 463	1026
195	241, 249	Load v. Green, 15 M. & W. 216	
Litt v. Martindale, 18 C. B. 314	732		258, 282, 291
Little v. Allen, Sup. Ct. Tex. 1882;		Loan Ass. v. Stonemetz, 29 Penn.	
13 Rep. 413	533	St. 534	502, 720
v. Banks, 85 N. Y. 258	786	v. Topeka, 20 Wall.	
v. Blunt, 9 Pick. 488	575	655	143
v. Dawson, 4 Dall. 111	719	Lobdell v. Baker, 1 Met. 193	
v. Duncan, 9 Rich. 55	36		241, 248, 269
v. Gibbs, 1 South. 213	756	v. Hopkins, 5 Cow. 516	
v. Herndon, 10 Wall. 26	697		575, 872, 990
v. Hobbs, 34 Me. 357	504	Lock v. Miller, 3 St. & P. 13	1017
v. Paddleford, 13 N. H. 167	230	Locke's App., 72 Penn. St. 491	
v. Riley, 43 N. H. 109	463		180, 184
v. Sewing Machine Co., 67		Locke v. Horner, 131 Mass. 93	721
Ind. 67	955	v. Locke, 57 Ala. 473	1021
Littlefield v. Coombs, 71 Me. 110		v. Smith, 41 N. H. 346	48, 65
	661, 696	Lockett v. Nicklin, 2 Ex. 93	634
v. Smith, 17 Me. 327	842	Lockhart v. Hullinger, 2 Ill. Ap.	
v. Winslow, 19 Me. 394	653	465	452
Littleton v. Littleton, 1 Dev. & B.		v. Van Alstyne, 14 Am.	
327	266, 399	Law Reg. 180	376
Livermore v. McNair, 34 N. J. Eq.		Locknane v. Emmerson, 11 Bush,	
478	239	69	700
v. Peru, 55 Me. 469	451	Lockridge v. Foster, 4 Scam. 569	214
v. Rand, 6 Fost. 85	924	Lockwood v. Beckwith, 6 Mich.	
Liverpool Asso. v. Fairhurst, 9		168	1013
Ex. 422	83, 89	v. Thomas, 12 Johns.	
Liverpool Marine Co. v. Hunter,		248	88
L. R. 3 Ch. 479	149	v. Thorne, 18 N. Y. 285	
Liverpool Wharf v. Prescott, 4			776, 778
Allen, 22	633	Lockyer v. Jones, Peake, 180 n.	983
Livings v. Wiler, 32 Ill. 387	185	Lodge v. Barnett, 46 Penn. St.	
Livingston v. Arnoux, 56 N. Y.		477	668
507	893	v. Dicus, 3 B. & Ald. 611	
v. Dugan, 20 Mo. 102	533		824, 949, 1032
v. Peru Co., 2 Paige,		v. Prichard, 3 De G. M. &	
390	249	G. 906	775
v. Rogers, 1 Caines,		Loeb v. Peters, 63 Ala. 243	878
584	523	v. Weis, 64 Ind. 285	785
v. Tremper, 11 Johns.		Loehner v. Ins. Co., 17 Mo. 247;	
101	833	19 Mo. 628	338 a
v. Wootan, 1 N. &		Loffus v. Maw, 3 Giff. 592	216
McC. 178	729	Loft v. Dennis, 1 E. & E. 474	318
Livingstone v. Whiting, 15 Q. B.		Logan v. Austin, 1 Stew. (Ala.)	
722	964	476	999
Llanelly R. R. v. R. R., L. R. 8		v. Brown, 81 Ill. 415	453, 453 a
Ch. 942	417, 540, 609	v. Gigley, 11 Ga. 243	340
Llewellyn v. Jersey, 11 M. & W.		v. Mathews, 6 Barr, 417	
183	668		199, 388, 520, 533
Lloyd v. Ashby, 2 C. & P. 138	826	v. Simmons, 3 Ired. Eq. 487	399
v. Banks, L. R. 3 Ch. 488	845	Lomax v. Arding, 10 Exch. 734	718
v. Collett, 4 Br. C. C. 469	888	Lombard v. Cobb, 14 Me. 222	816
v. Crispe, 5 Taunt. 249	321	Lomi v. Tucker, 4 C. & P. 15	221, 259

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
London v. Bernardiston, 1 Lev. 16	416	Lord v. Bigelow, 124 Mass. 185	955
London Ass. v. Mansel, L. R. 11		v. Brookfield, 8 Vroom, 552	282
Ch. D. 363 ; 41 L. T. N. S. 225	256	v. Burbank, 18 Me. 178	944
London Bank v. Groome, L. R. 8		v. Copper Mining Co., 2	
Q. B. D. 288	953	Phil. 740	139
v. Narraway, L. R.		v. French, 61 Me. 420	233
15 Eq. 93	1010	v. Goddard, 13 How. 198	214
v. Wentworth, L.		v. Grow, 39 Penn. St. 88	
R. 5 Ex. D. 96		224, 227, 904	
185, 1050		v. Jeffkins, 35 Beav. 7	169
London Bank of Australia v. Lem-		v. Ocean Bk., 20 Penn. St.	
priere, L. R. 4 P. C. 572	77	384	954
London, etc. R. R. v. Blackmore,		v. Staples, 23 N. H. 448	758
L. R. 4 H.		v. Wheeler, 1 Gray, 282	
L. 610	1035	311, 314, 326, 330, 547	
v. Fairclough,		Lorillard v. Clyde, 86 N. Y. 384	
2 Man. & G.		337, 378, 654	
674	138	Loring v. Boston, 7 Metc. (Mass.)	
v. Glyn, 1 E.		409	9, 24
& E. 652	457	v. Cooke, 3 Pick. 48	977
London & Provincial Coal Co., in		v. Ins. Co., 8 Gray, 28	837
re, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 525	135	v. Mansfield, 17 Mass. 394	740
Long's Appeal, 87 Penn. St. 114	1067	v. Steineman, 1 Metc.	
Long v. Battle, 39 Mich. 323	3	(Mass.) 204	76
v. Caffrey, 93 Penn. St. 526	558	v. Sumner, 23 Pick. 98	494
v. Hartwell, 5 Vroom, Law,		Lorymer v. Smith, 1 B. & C. 1	
116	684	565, 914, 916	
v. Hickingbottom, 28 Miss.		Losee v. Clute, 51 N. Y. 494	228
772	230	Loss v. Obry, 22 N. J. Eq. 52	210
v. Long, 9 Md. 348	353	Lothian v. Henderson, 3 B. & P.	
v. Long, 77 N. C. 304	265	499	740
v. Pool, 68 N. C. 479	654	Lothrop v. Otis, 7 Allen, 435	914
v. R. R., 50 N. Y. 76	658	Louden v. Blythe, 16 Penn. St.	
v. Towl, 42 Mo. 545	433	532	147
v. Warren, 68 N. Y. 426	244, 245	Loudon Saving Fund v. Bank, 36	
v. Wharton, 3 Keb. 304	468	Penn. St. 498	797, 841
v. Woodman, 58 Me. 49	257, 260	Louisiana v. New Orleans, 102 U.	
Longchamp v. Kenny, 1 Dougl.		S. 203	1067
137	723	Louisville v. Savings Bank, 104	
Longley v. Griggs, 10 Pick. 121	765	U. S. 469	885
Longridge v. Dorville, 5 B. & Ald.		Louisville Man. Co. v. Welch, 10	
117	521, 533, 1000	How. 461	570, 570 a
Longshore v. Jack, 30 Iowa, 298	259	Louisville, etc. R. R. v. Brownlee,	
Longworth v. Mitchell, 26 Oh. St.		14 Bush,	
334	15, 19	590	438
Lonsdale v. Bank, 18 Ohio, 126	25 a	v. Letson, 2	
v. Brown, 4 Wash. C. C.		How. 497	127
148	514, 532	Lounsbury v. Beebe, 46 Conn.	
Loomis v. Bank, 10 Oh. St. 327	580	291	890
v. Hudson, 18 Iowa, 416	206	Lovatt v. Hamilton, 5 M. & W.	
v. Newhall, 15 Pick. 159		639	563, 597, 900
511, 512		Love v. Cobb, 63 N. C. 324	301
v. Spencer, 2 Paige, 153		v. Hoss, 62 Ind. 255	730
106, 114		v. Wells, 25 Ind. 503	382
Loop v. Litchfield, 42 N. Y. 351	228	Love Bird, The, L. R. 6 P. D. 80	308
v. Loop, 1 Vt. 177	53	Lovejoy v. Ins. Co., 45 Me. 472	338 a
Lorraine v. Cartwright, 3 Wash.		v. Murray, 3 Wall. 1	7
C. C. 151	656	v. Whipple, 18 Vt. 379	382
Lord v. Baldwin, 6 Pick. 352	818	Lovell v. Williams, 125 Mass.	
v. Belknap, 1 Cush. 279	581, 582	439	954

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Lovelock v. Franklyn, 8 Q. B. 371		Lucy v. Mouflet, 5 H. & N. 229	589
606, 855 a,	995	Ludbrook v. Barrett, 46 L. J. C.	
Loveridge v. Cooper, 3 Russ. 1	845	P. 798	594
v. Larned, U. S. Cir.		Ludgater v. Love, 44 L. T. N. S.	
Ct. N. Y. 1881; 12		694	270
Rep. 324	933	Ludlow v. Bowne, 1 Johns. 1	792
Lovering v. Coal Co., 54 Penn.		v. Hardy, 38 Mich. 690	
St. 291	311, 315, 547		367, 368
Lovet v. Price, Wright (Ohio), 89	719	v. McCrea, 1 Wend. 228	
Lowber v. Connit, 36 Wis. 176	22, 678		816, 826
Lowe v. Griffith, 1 Scott, 458	67	v. Van Rensselaer, 1 Johns.	
v. Peers, 4 Burr. 2225; Wil-		94	445
mot, 364	396, 495	Ludwig v. Leonard, 9 W. & S. 44	662
v. Pimental, 115 Mass. 44	708	Luebbering v. Oberkoetter, 1 Mo.	
v. Sinklear, 27 Mo. 308	31, 34	Ap. 393	382
v. Weatherley, 4 Dev. & B.		Lufkin v. Mayall, 25 N. H. 82	42
212	535	Lugard v. Biggs, Lond. Law Times,	
Lowell v. Daniels, 2 Gray, 161	89	Dec. 24, 1881	738
v. Ins. Co., 8 Cush. 127	838	Lukens's App., 7 W. & S. 48	726
v. Lane, 33 Barb. 292	1020	Lukens v. Freund, Sup. Ct. Kan.	
v. R. R., 23 Pick. 24		1882; 25 Alb. L. J. 392	222
353, 354, 370,	771	Lull v. Kerf, 84 Ill. 225	594
Lowell Bank v. Winchester, 8 Al-		Lumley v. Gye, 2 B. & B. 216	
len, 109	271		809, 812
Lowndes v. Chisolm, 2 McCord,		v. Wagner, 1 De G. M.	
Ch. 455	199	& G. 604	323
Lowrey v. Murrell, 2 Port. 280	960	Lumpkin v. Wilson, 5 Heisk. 555	943
Lowry v. Adams, 22 Vt. 160	25 a	Lumsden's case, L. R. 4 Ch. 31	40, 41
v. Bank, 2 W. & S. 210	768	Lundie v. Robertson, 7 East, 231	513
v. Barelli, 21 Oh. St. 324	603	Lungren v. Pennell, Sup. Ct.	
v. Bourdieu, 2 Doug. 468	754	Penn. 1881; 10 Weekly Notes,	
v. McLane, 3 Grant, 333	282	297	252, 254
v. Mehaffy, 10 Watts, 387	582	Lungstrass v. Ins. Co., 48 Mo. 201	18
Lowther v. Lowther, 13 Ves. 95		Lunsford v. Lead Co., 54 Mo. 426	680
161, 378		Lunt v. Silver, 5 Mo. Ap. 186	700
Lozear v. Shields, 23 N. J. Eq. 509		v. Stevens, 24 Me. 534	831
110, 158		Lupin v. Marie, 6 Wend. 77	249
Lucas v. Bank, 78 Penn. St. 228		Lush's Trusts, in re, L. R. 4 Ch.	
469, 1029		591	78, 89
v. Beale, 10 C. B. 739	815	Lyall v. Edwards, 6 H. & N. 337	
v. Birdsey, 41 Conn. 357	298		1035, 1037
v. Chamberlain, 8 B. Monr.		Lydecker v. Palisade Co., 33 N.	
276	785	J. Eq. 415	1063
v. Godwin, 3 Bing. N. C.		Lyell v. Sanbourn, 2 Mich. 109	845
737; 4 Scott, 502		Lykens v. Tower, 27 Penn. St.	
558, 708, 748,	891	462	358
v. Ins. Co., 6 Cow. 635	765, 835	Lyle v. Gray, 47 Iowa, 153	708
v. James, 7 Hare, 410	644	Lyman v. Bank, 12 How. 225	955
v. McAlilly, 1 McMul. 311	814	v. Robinson, 14 Allen, 242	4
v. Novosilieski, 1 Esp. 296	938	v. U. S., 17 Johns. 373	206
v. Pitney, 27 N. J. L. 221	138	Lynam v. Califer, 64 N. C. 572	
v. Wilkinson, 1 H. & N. 420			204, 206
180, 942,	952	Lynch, ex parte, L. R. 2 Ch. D.	
v. Worswick, 1 Mood. & R.		227	54
293	197	Lynch's Appeal, 97 Penn. St. 349	
Luce v. Ins. Co., 105 Mass. 297	630	235, 245, 282, 340,	376
Lucesco Oil Co. v. Brewer, 66		Lynch v. Hartwell, 8 Johns. 422	135
Penn. St. 351	552, 580	v. Livingston, 6 N. Y. 422	655
Lucy, ex parte, 4 De G. M. & G.		v. O'Donnell, 127 Mass.	
356	533	311	623

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Lynch v. Rinaldo, 58 How. Pr.		McCabe v. Morehead, 1 W. & S.	
133	244	513	230
v. Stone, 4 Denio, 356	717	McCall v. Davis, 56 Penn. St. 431	248
Lynde v. Budd, 2 Paige, 191	59	v. Price, 1 McCord, 82	824
v. McGregor, 13 Allen, 172	233	M'Call v. Taylor, 19 C. B. N. S.	
Lyndeborough Glass Co. v. Mass.		301	795
Glass Co., 111 Mass. 315	135, 137	McCalmont v. R. R., U. S. C. C.	
Lyne v. Bank, 5 J. J. Marsh. 545	91	1881; 10 Weekly Notes, 338	138
Lynn v. Bruce, 2 H. Bl. 317	997, 1003	McCandless v. Engle, 51 Penn. St.	
Lyon v. Bertram, 20 How. 149		309	147
189, 218, 748, 752, 919		McCandlish v. Newman, 22 Penn.	
v. Culbertson, 83 Ill. 33		St. 460	593
453, 453 a		McCaun v. McNulty, 7 Gray, 139	589
v. Home, L. R. 6 Eq. 655	161	McCartee v. Teller, 2 Paige, 511	73
v. Jerome, 26 Wend. 485	180	McCarthy v. Decaix, 2 Rus. & M.	
v. Kent, 45 Ala. 656	364	614	198, 199
v. Mitchell, 36 N. Y. 235	403	McCartney v. Hubbell, 52 Wis.	
v. Richmond, 2 Johns. Ch.		360	4
51	198	v. Shepard, 21 Mo.	
v. Strong, 6 Vt. 219	382	573	405
v. Summers, 7 Conn. 399	837	McCarty v. Kearnan, 86 Ill. 291	114
Lyth v. Ault, 7 Exch. 669	949	v. Murray, 3 Gray, 578	31
Lythgoe v. Vernon, 5 H. & N. 180		McCaskey v. Graff, 23 Penn. St.	
730, 735		321	283, 285
Lytle v. Bird, 3 Jones, N. C. 222	244	McCaughy v. Smith, 27 N. Y. 39	700
v. State, 17 Ark. 608	429	McCauley v. Holtz, 62 Ind. 205	934
		McClain v. Easley, 4 Baxt. 520	1067
		McClanahan v. McKinley, 52 Iowa,	
		222	215, 259
		McClary v. Lowell, 44 Vt. 116	
		382, 388	
		McClean v. Kennard, L. R. 9 Ch.	
		336	804
		McClellan v. Scott, 24 Wis. 81	
		260, 276	
		McClelland v. Nichols, 24 Minn.	
		176	608
		McClernan v. Hall, 33 Md. 293	658
		McClintick v. Cummins, 3 McLean,	
		158	146, 151 a
		McCluer v. Manchester R. R., 13	
		Gray, 124	137
		McClung v. Kelly, 21 Iowa, 508	
		223, 904	
		McClure v. Andrews, 68 Ind. 97	955
		v. Lewis, 72 Mo. 314	161, 254
		v. Oxford, 94 U. S. 429	
		143, 453	
		v. R. R., 13 Gray, 124	140
		v. Wilson, 43 Ill. 356	528
		McClurg's App., 58 Penn. St. 51	
		433, 434	
		McClurg v. Lecky, 3 Pen. & W.	
		83	380
		v. Price, 59 Penn. St. 420	714
		McCollin v. Gilpin, L. R. 6 Q. B.	
		D. 516; 44 L. T. N. S. 914	202
		McCollum v. Cushing, 22 Ark.	
		540	570
		McComb v. R. R., 70 N. C. 178	271

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
M'Combs v. M'Kennan, 2 W. & S.		McCurdy v. Rogers, 21 Wis.	197 277
216	870	M'Cutchen v. M'Cutchen, 9 Port.	
McConnel v. Murphy, L. R. 5 P.		650	495
C. 203	657, 670, 902	v. McGahay, 11 Johns.	
M'Connell v. Hector, 3 B. & P.		281	87
113	473, 476, 478	McDaniel v. Barns, 5 Bush, 183	923
M'Coon v. Smith, 3 Hill, 147	89	McDaniels v. Bank, 29 Vt. 230	
McCormick v. Basal, 50 Iowa, 523	589	199, 1000	
v. Demary, 10 Neb.		v. Lapham, 21 Vt. 222	1000
515	718	v. Whitney, 38 Iowa,	
v. Fitzmorris, 39 Mo.		60	580
24	698	McDonald v. Black, 20 Ohio, 185	1026
v. Huse, 66 Ill. 315	658	Macdonald v. Ins. Co., L. R. 9 Q.	
v. Kelly, 28 Minn. 135;		B. 328	256, 789
24 Alb. L. J. 212		McDonald v. Magruder, 3 Pet. 470	765
	213, 224	v. Snelling, 14 Allen,	
v. Ketchum, 48 Wis.		290	1043
643	708	v. Trafton, 15 Me. 225	214
v. Littler, 85 Ill. 62		McDonald Man. Co. v. Thomas,	
101, 102, 109, 117 a		53 Iowa, 548	219
v. Malin, 5 Blackf.		McDonnell v. Milholland, 48 Md.	
509	161	540	208
v. Trotter, 10 S. & R.		MacDougall v. Gardiner, L. R. 1	
94	599	Ch. D. 13	139
McCoy v. Archer, 3 Barb. 323	230	McDowall v. Wood, 2 Nott & McC.	
M'Coy v. Huffman, 8 Cow. 84	42	413	76
McCracken v. Elder, 34 Penn. St.		McDowell v. Blackstone Canal, 5	
239	1021	Mason, 11	931
v. Hayward, 2 How.		v. Laev, 35 Wis. 171	
608	1067	786, 853	
v. Moody, 33 Ark. 81	1067	v. Simms, 6 Ired. Eq.	
v. West, 17 Ohio, 16	271	278	267
M'Cready v. Freedly, 3 Rawle,		v. Tyson, 14 S. & R.	
251	825	300	1021
McCreery v. Davis, 9 B. Mon. 128	633	McElhenny's App., 61 Penn. St.	
v. Green, 38 Mich. 172	311	188	252, 282
McCreight v. Aiken, 1 Rice, 56		McElroy v. Buck, 35 Mich. 434	27
	114, 123	McEvers v. Steamboat, 22 Mo. 187	310
McCrillis v. Bartlett, 8 N. H. 569		McEwen v. Bigelow, 40 Mich. 215	1015
101, 106, 116, 121, 124		McEwing v. James, 36 Ohio St.	
v. Carlton, 37 Vt. 139		152	1018
	286, 290	McFaddin v. Vincent, 21 Tex. 47	104
v. Howe, 3 N. H. 348	66	McFarlan v. Ins. Co., 4 Denio,	
McCrocklin v. McCrocklin, 2 B.		392	141
Mon. 370	90, 395	McFarland v. Newman, 9 Watts,	
McCulloch v. Gregory, 1 K. & J.		55	220
286	213, 214	Macfarlane v. Norris, 2 B. & S.	
v. Ins. Co., 1 Pick. 278	18	783	1009
v. McKee, 16 Penn. St.		v. Taylor, L. R. 1 Sc.	
289	495	Ap. 245	906
McCullough's App., 12 Penn. St.		McFerran v. Taylor, 3 Cranch,	
197	397	270	194
McCullough v. Ins. Co., 46 Ala.		McGavock v. Puryear, 6 Cold. 34	343
376	128	McGee v. Mathis, 4 Wall. 143	1063
v. Wilson, 21 Penn.		v. Willing, 31 Leg. Int. 37	53
St. 436	89	McGenness v. Adriatic Mills, 116	
McCullum v. Gourlay, 8 Johns.		Mass. 177	274, 275
147	729	McGiffin v. Baird, 62 N. Y. 331	230
M'Cully's case, 2 Lew. C. C. 272	640	McGill v. Woodward, 3 Brev. 401	56
McCune v. Belt, 45 Mo. 174	765	M'Ginn v. Holmes, 2 Watts, 121	954

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
M'Ginn v. Shaeffer, 7 Watts, 412	32	Mackay v. Dick, L. R. 6 Ap. Ca.	
McGoon v. Ankeny, 11 Ill. 558	421	251	603
McGrath v. Clark, 56 N. Y. 34		v. Douglas, L. R. 14 Eq.	
	695, 700	106	377
v. Herndon, 4 T. B. Mon.		McKay v. Simpson, 6 Ired. Eq.	
480	607	452	199, 206
v. Merwin, 112 Mass.		McKecknie v. Ward, 58 N. Y.	
467	388	541	570 a
McGregor v. Balch, 17 Vt. 562	833	McKee v. Hamilton, 33 Oh. St. 7	955
Macgregor v. R. R., 18 Q. B. 618	135	v. Manice, 11 Cush. 357	729
McGregor v. Wait, 10 Gray, 72	22	M'Kellar v. Wallace, 8 Moore P.	
McGregory v. Gregory, 107		C. 378	996
Mass. 543	694	McKelvey v. Jarvis, 87 Penn. St.	
McGrew v. Forsythe, 31 Iowa,		414	924
179	263	McKelway v. Armour, 2 Stock.	
McGuire v. Faber, 25 Penn. St.		Ch. 115	206
436	247	McKenna v. George, 2 Rich. Eq.	
M'Hard v. Whetcroft, 3 H. &		15	765
McH. 85	980	Mackenzie v. Coulson, L. R. 8 Eq.	
M'Henry v. M'Call, 10 Watts,		368	207
456	799	McKenzie v. Culbreth, 66 N. C.	
Machias v. Whitney, 16 Me. 343	633	534	504, 997
Machias Hotel Co. v. Coyle, 35		v. Hesketh, L. R. 7	
Me. 405	528	Ch. D. 675	190, 196
Machir v. Moore, 2 Grat. 257	450	v. Nevius, 22 Me. 138	933
Machor v. Burroughs, 14 Ohio St.		v. Sykes, 47 Mich. 294;	
519	77	13 Rep. 400	631
McHugh v. Schuylkill, 67 Penn.		McKesson v. Jones, 66 N. C. 258	474
St. 391	283, 288	McKewan v. Sanderson, L. R. 15	
M'Ilreath v. Margetson, 4 Doug.		Eq. 229; 20 Eq. 65	376, 379, 380
278	763	McKibbin v. Brown, 1 McCart.	
McIlvaine v. Gethen, 3 Whart.		13; 2 McCart. 498	4
575	397	McKiernan v. Lenzen, 56 Cal. 61	130
McIniffe v. Wheelock, 1 Gray,		McKillip v. McKillip, 8 Barb. 552	990
600	982	Mackinley v. M'Gregor, 3 Whart.	
McIntire v. Preston, 10 Ill. 48		369	84, 258, 288
	137, 138	McKinley v. Watkins, 13 Ill. 140	
M'Intosh v. Ladd, 1 Humph. 459	399		4, 533
McIntosh v. Lown, 49 Barb. 550	318	v. Winston, 19 Ala.	
M'Intosh v. R. R., 2 Mac. & G. 74	594	301	1013
McIntosh v. Saunders, 68 Ill. 128	205	M'Kinnell v. Robinson, 3 M. &	
M'Intyre v. Belcher, 14 C. B. N.		W. 434	344
N. S. 654	663	McKinney v. Alvis, 14 Ill. 33	
McIntyre v. Kennedy, 29 Penn.		836, 837, 840, 855, 858	
St. 448	954	M'Kinney v. Pinckard, 2 Leigh,	
M'Intyre v. Miller, 13 M. & W.		149	518
725	952	McKnight v. Devlin, 52 N. Y. 399	
McIntyre v. Parks, 3 Met. 207	18, 843		230, 712, 899
M'Iver v. Richardson, 1 M. & S.		v. Hogg, 3 Brev. 44	42
557	17, 570	McKown v. Furgason, 47 Iowa,	
Mack's Appeal, 68 Penn. St. 231	495	636	214
Mack v. Bragg, 30 Vt. 571	717	M'Lachan v. Evans, 1 Y. & J. 380	723
v. Lee, 13 R. I. —	877	McLaren v. Hall, 26 Iowa, 297	85
McKanna v. Merry, 61 Ill. 177	69	v. Hutchinson, 18 Cal.	
Mackay, ex parte, L. R. 8 Ch. 643		80	784
	362, 379	McLaughlin v. Bank, 7 How. 220	377
McKay v. Carrington, 1 McLean,		MacLay v. Harvey, 90 Ill. 525	
50	887		4, 9, 15, 18, 19
Mackay v. Com Bank, L. R. 5 P.		McLay v. Perry, 44 L. T. N. S. 152	
C. 394	133, 270, 275		190, 215, 902

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
McLean v. Richardson, 127 Mass.		Macon v. Shores, 97 U. S. 272	137
339	282	McPadden v. R. R., 44 N. Y. 478	310
v. Towle, 3 Sandf. 117	765	McPherson v. Cox, 96 U. S. 404	427
Maclean's trusts, in re, L. R. 19		v. Cox, 86 N. Y. 472	149
Eq. 274	411	v. Pemberton, 1 Jones	
McLear v. Hunsicker, 30 La. An.		N. C. 378	349
Pt. II. 1225	932	McPike v. Allman, 53 Mo. 551	202
McLellan v. Bank, 24 Me. 566	831	McQuade v. Rosecrans, 36 Oh. St.	
v. Hayford, Sup. Ct. Me.		442	235, 340, 376
1881; 12 Rep. 748	708	McQuiston v. Board, 88 Penn. St.	
Macloon v. Smith, 49 Wis. 200	149	29	662
McLoskey v. Gordon, 26 Miss. 260	340	McRae v. Mattoon, 10 Pick. 49	841
M'Lughan v. Bovard, 4 Watts, 308		McShane v. Hazlehurst, 50 Md.	
	954, 958	107	251, 282
Maclure, ex parte, L. R. 5 Ch.		McSparran v. Neeley, 91 Penn. St.	
737	325	17	118
McMahan v. Geiger, 73 Mo. 145	514	McStea v. Matthews, 50 N. Y.	
M'Mahon v. Burchell, 5 Hare,		166	473
322	1022	McTavish v. Carroll, 1 Md. Ch.	
McMahon v. Field, L. R. 7 Q. B.		160	929
D. 591	1046	Mactier v. Frith, 6 Wend. 103	
v. R. R., 75 N. Y. 231	786	9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19,	317
v. Smith, 47 Conn. 221		McVean v. Scott, 46 Barb. 379	700
144, 151 a, 483, 484	484	McVeigh v. U. S., 11 Wall. 259	478
McManus v. Bark, L. R. 5 Ex. 65		McVey v. Cantrell, 70 N. Y. 295	77
498, 999, 1003	1003	McWillie v. Kirkpatrick, 28 Miss.	
McMaster v. Merrick, 41 Mich.		802	513
505	932	McWilliams v. Bryan, 21 La. An.	
McMasters v. Reed, 1 Grant (Penn.)		211	349
36	128	Maddick v. Marshall, 17 C. B. (N.	
McMichael v. Carlyle, 53 Wis.		S.) 829	269
504	678	Maddock v. Hammett, 7 T. R. 184	470
v. Kilmer, 76 N. Y. 36		Maddon v. White, 2 T. R. 159	45
	251, 253	Maddox v. Miller, 1 Maule & S.	
McMillan v. Fish, 29 N. J. Eq. 610		738	69
199, 207, 208		Maddux v. Bevan, 39 Md. 485	504
v. Malloy, 10 Neb. 228		Madison Co. v. People, 58 Ill. 456	
712, 714, 717		166, 518	
v. Parkell, 64 Mo. 286	765	Madison, etc. R. R. v. Norwich	
v. R. R., 16 Mich. 79		Saving Society, 24 Ind. 457	
	572, 793	181, 270	
v. Solomon, 42 Ala. 356	318	Magaw v. Lambert, 3 Barr, 444	318
M'Minn v. Richmonds, 6 Yerg. 9	66	Magee v. Billingsley, 3 Ala. 679	914
McMurray v. St. Louis Co., 33 Mo.		v. Canal Co., 5 Cal. 258	138
377	198	v. Carmack, 13 Ill. 289	960
v. Spicer, L. R. 5 Eq.		v. Lavell, L. R. 9 C. P. 107	652
527	668, 890, 892	Magellan Pirates, The, 18 Jur. 18;	
McNaughten v. Partridge, 11 Ohio,		25 Eng. L. & Eq. 595	319
223	199	Maggort v. Hansbarger, 8 Leigh,	
McNeil v. Bank, 46 N. Y. 325	796	532	318
M'Neill v. Reid, 2 Moore & S. 89;		Maghee v. Kellogg, 24 Wend. 32	740
9 Bing. 68	321, 523	v. R. R., 45 N. Y. 514	708
McNiell's case, L. R. 10 Eq. 503	287	Magniac v. Thompson, 7 Pet. 348	537
McNish v. Reynolds, 10 Weekly		Magruder v. Gage, 33 Md. 344	877
Notes, 24; 95 Penn. St. 483		Maguire v. Smock, 42 Ind. 1	402, 442
	499, 870	Mahaiwe Bk. v. Douglass, 31 Conn.	
McNitt v. Clark, 7 Johns. 465	621	170	700
McNutt v. McKwen, 1 Weekly		v. Peck, 127 Mass.	
Notes, 552	433	298	927, 934
Macon v. Huff, 60 Ga. 221	404, 413	Mahan v. U. S., 16 Wall. 143	494

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Mahoney Mining Co. v. Bank, 104 U. S. 192; 21 Am. Law Reg. 100	136	Mandal v. Mandal, 28 La. An. 556	654
Mahony v. Mining Co., L. R. 7 H. L. 869	132	Manderson v. Bank, 28 Penn. St. 379	362, 467
Mahurin v. Harding, 28 N. H. 128	237	Mandeville v. Welch, 5 Wheat. 277	506, 507, 526, 728, 840, 855
Maigley v. Hauer, 7 Johns. 341	540	Manes v. Durant, 2 Rich. Eq. 404	399
Maillard v. Argyle, 6 M. & G. 40	857, 954	Maney v. Porter, 3 Humph. 347	250
Main's case, 5 Co. 20 b	606	Mangles v. Dixon, 3 H. L. C. 702	842, 845
Maine Stage Co. v. Longley, 14 Me. 444	128	Manhattan Co. v. Thompson, 58 N. Y. 80	77
Mainwaring v. Leslie, 2 C. & P. 507; M. & M. 18	87, 88	Mann v. Betterly, 21 Vt. 326	98, 103, 110, 158
v. Newman, 2 B. & P. 120	806	v. Chandler, 9 Mass. 335	810 a
Maitland v. Bank, 38 L. J. C. 363	25 a	v. Cooke, 20 Conn. 178	528, 595
v. Wilcox, 17 Penn. St. 231	5	v. Everston, 32 Ind. 355	223, 905
Major v. Gibson, 1 Pat. & H. 48	427	v. Pearson, 2 Johns. 37	190
v. Hansen, 2 Biss. 195	696	v. Whitbeck, 17 Barb. 388	665
v. Holmes, 124 Mass. 108	79	Manning v. Albee, 11 Allen, 520	245, 259, 260
Majors v. Everton, 89 Ill. 56	91	v. Cox, 7 Moore, 617	1038
Makepeace v. Harvard Coll., 10 Pet. 298	665	v. Johnson, 26 Ala. 446	47, 48 a
Makin v. Watkinson, L. R. 6 Ex. 25	571, 574	v. Lunn, 2 C. & K. 13	974
Malcolm v. Scott, 5 Exch. 601	728	v. Mills, 12 Up. C. Q. B. 515	25 a
Maleverer v. Redshaw, 1 Mod. 35	338	v. Purcell, 7 De G. M. & G. 55	729
Malin v. Malin, 1 Wend. 625	888	Manser's case, 2 Coke, 3 a	198
Malins v. Freeman, 2 Keen, 25	186	Mansfield v. Beard, 82 N. Y. 60	567
v. Freeman, 4 Bing. N. C. 395	27	v. Trigg, 113 Mass. 350	221, 560, 748, 903, 904
Mallalieu v. Hodgson, 16 Q. B. 689	380, 498, 759	v. Watson, 2 Iowa, 111	118, 119
Mallam v. Arden, 10 Bing. 299	621, 623	Manson v. Felton, 13 Pick. 206	124
Mallan v. May, 11 M. & W. 653; 13 M. & W. 511	430, 431, 433, 632, 638, 672	v. Thacker, L. R. 7 C. D. 620	749
Mallory v. Ins. Co., 47 N. Y. 52	256	Mantell v. Gibbs, 1 Brownl. 64	146
v. Leach, 35 Vt. 156	232, 249	Manter v. Churchill, 127 Mass. 31	513, 532
Malone v. Dougherty, 79 Penn. St. 46	870	Many v. Iron Co., 9 Paige, 188	655
v. Kelley, 54 Ala. 532	161	Mapes v. Bank, 80 Penn. St. 163	365
v. R. R., 12 Gray, 388	22, 572	Mapleback, in re, L. R. 4 C. D. 150	483
Malpica v. McKown, 1 La. 248	18	Maples v. Wightman, 4 Conn. 376	41, 43
Maltby v. Murrells, 5 H. & N. 813	575, 972	Marble Co. v. Riply, 10 Wal. 339	3
Manahan v. Noyes, 52 N. H. 232	282, 284, 730, 856	March v. Eastern R. R. Co., 40 N. H. 548	139
Manby v. Cremonini, 6 Exch. 808	581	v. Ward, Peake, 130	828
v. Scott, 1 Sid. 109	68	Marchington v. Vernon, 1 B. & P. 106, note c.	785
Manchester Asso., in re, L. R. 5 Ch. 640	864	Mardall v. Thellusson, 6 E. & B. 976	1022
Manchester Bk. v. Fellows, 8 Foster, 302	573	Mare v. Sandford, 1 Giff. 288	379
Manchester R. R. v. Brooks, L. R. 2 Ex. D. 243	1021, 1028	Margetson v. Wright, 5 M. & P. 606; 7 Bing. 603	224, 227

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Maria Anna Coal Co., <i>in re</i> , L. R.		Marshall <i>v.</i> Thurston, cited 10	
20 Eq. 585	832	Fed. Rep. 250	453
Marie <i>v.</i> Garrison, 83 N. Y. 14		Marshalltown Bk. <i>v.</i> Bonawitz, 47	
443, 603, 708	708	Iowa, 322	470
Marine Bk. <i>v.</i> Wright, 48 N. Y. 1	793	Marston <i>v.</i> Knight, 29 Me. 341	189
Marino's case, L. R. 2 Ch. 596	687	Martendale <i>v.</i> Follet, 1 N. H. 95	
Marion <i>v.</i> Faxon, 20 Conn. 486	204	695, 700	
Marion Bank <i>v.</i> Dunkin, 54 Ala.		Martin <i>v.</i> Black, 20 Ala. 309	
471	129	499, 523, 532	
Markle <i>v.</i> Hatfield, 2 Johns. 445		<i>v.</i> Black, 21 Ala. 721	9
744, 853, 955, 960	960	<i>v.</i> Bolton, 75 Ind. 295	376
Marks <i>v.</i> Hamilton, 7 Ex. 323	457	<i>v.</i> Clarke, 8 R. I. 389	
Marland <i>v.</i> Stanwood, 101 Mass.		421, 422, 427	
470	898	<i>v.</i> Crompe, 1 L. Ray. 340	820
Marlett <i>v.</i> Jackman, 3 Allen, 287	323	<i>v.</i> Draher, 5 Watts, 544	924
Marlow <i>v.</i> Pittfield, 1 P. Wms.		<i>v.</i> Gale, L. R. 4 C. D. 428	65
558	86	<i>v.</i> Hamlin, 18 Mich. 354	198
Marmon <i>v.</i> Marmon, 47 Iowa, 121	106	<i>v.</i> Hewson, 10 Exch. 737	729
Marr's App., 78 Penn. St. 66	243	<i>v.</i> Iron Works, 35 Ga. 320	495
Marriott <i>v.</i> Brune, 9 How. 619	149	<i>v.</i> Jordan, 60 Me. 531	
<i>v.</i> Hampton, 7 T. R. 269	740	254, 259	
Marryatts <i>v.</i> White, 2 Stark. 101		<i>v.</i> Kunzmuller, 37 N. Y.	
924, 926	926	396	844
Marsden <i>v.</i> Goode, 2 C. & K. 133	977	<i>v.</i> McCormick, 8 N. Y.	
<i>v.</i> Moore, 4 H. & N. 500	581	331	181
Marsh <i>v.</i> Cook, 32 N. J. Eq. 262	242	<i>v.</i> Martin, 35 Ala. 560	285
<i>v.</i> Falker, 40 N. Y. 562		<i>v.</i> Martin, 1 Heisk. 644	161
214, 240, 241, 269, 1046	1046	<i>v.</i> Mayo, 10 Mass. 137	33, 63
<i>v.</i> Gold, 2 Pick. 285	405	<i>v.</i> Mitchell, 2 Jac. & W.	
<i>v.</i> Holbrook, 3 Abb. App.		413	2, 787
176	427	<i>v.</i> Mohr, 56 Ala. 221	1013
<i>v.</i> Keating, 1 Bing. N. C.		<i>v.</i> Morgan, 1 B. & B. 289	730
198	722, 730, 736	<i>v.</i> R. R., L. R. 3 Exch. 9	140
<i>v.</i> Laforest, 1 La. An. 7	943	<i>v.</i> R. R., 3 Phila. 316	402
<i>v.</i> Pedder, 4 Camp. 257	955	<i>v.</i> Roberts, 5 Cush. 126	285
<i>v.</i> R. R., 64 Ill. 414	414	<i>v.</i> Schoenberger, 8 W. &	
<i>v.</i> Rainsford, 2 Leon, 111	515	S. 367	311, 714, 900
<i>v.</i> Robeno, 5 Phila. 190	362	<i>v.</i> Terrell, 12 Sm. & M.	
<i>v.</i> Russell, 66 N. Y. 288		571	452
442 a, 443		<i>v.</i> Wade, 37 Cal. 168	406, 407
<i>v.</i> Whitmore, 21 Wall. 178		<i>v.</i> Wallace, 40 Ga. 52	474
337, 378, 654		<i>v.</i> Wharton, 38 Ala. 637	264
Marshal <i>v.</i> Crutwell, L. R. 20 Eq.		Martindale <i>v.</i> Harris, 26 Oh. St.	
328	77 a	379	285
Marshall <i>v.</i> Baker, 19 Me. 402	856	Martineau <i>v.</i> Kitching, L. R. 7 Q.	
<i>v.</i> Craig, 1 Bibb, 379	603	B. 436	311, 583
<i>v.</i> Croom, 60 Ala. 121	376	Martinez <i>v.</i> Vives, 32 La. An. 305	427
<i>v.</i> Drawhorn, 27 Ga. 275	224	Martyn <i>v.</i> Clue, 18 Q. B. 661	580
<i>v.</i> Duke, 51 Ind. 62	230	<i>v.</i> Hind, 2 Cowp. 443; 1	
<i>v.</i> Gougler, 10 S. & R.		Dougl. 142	506
164	695, 696, 702	Marvin <i>v.</i> Bennett, 8 Paige, 312	298
<i>v.</i> Hopkins, 15 East,		<i>v.</i> Mandell, 125 Mass. 562	754
309	723, 732	<i>v.</i> Stone, 2 Cow. 781	670
<i>v.</i> Lynn, 5 M. & W. 109	661	Maryland Fertilizing Co. <i>v.</i> Lor-	
<i>v.</i> Means, 12 Ga. 61	424	entz, 44 Md. 218	607
<i>v.</i> R. R., 11 C. B. 655	140	Maryland Hosp. <i>v.</i> Foreman, 29	
<i>v.</i> R. R., 16 How. 314	402	Md. 524	129
<i>v.</i> Rutton, 8 T. R. 545	81	Marzetti <i>v.</i> Williams, 1 B. & Ad.	
<i>v.</i> Stephens, 8 Humph.		415	724
159	77.	Mason <i>v.</i> Bauman, 62 Ill. 76	378

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Mason v. Bradley, 11 M. & W.		Matthiessen R. R. Co. v. McMahon,	
590	700	38 N. J. L. 536	102, 117 a
v. Briggs, 16 Mass. 453	576, 882	Mattingly v. Nye, 8 Wall. 370	377
v. Campbell, 27 Minn. 54	1003	Mattocks v. Lyman, 18 Vt. 98	22
v. Crosby, 1 Wood. & M.		Maugham v. Sharpe, 17 C. B. N.	
342	241, 242, 270	S. 443	803
v. Ditchbourne, 1 M. & R.		Mauleverer v. Hawxby, 2 Wms.	
460	245	Saund. 78	210
v. Eldred, 6 Wall. 231	860	Maull v. Vaughn, 45 Ala. 134	519
v. Gardiner, 4 Bro. C. C.		Maunsell v. White, 4 H. L. C.	
436	469	1039	216
v. Hall, 30 Ala. 599		Maurer's App., 86 Penn. St. 380	77
	583, 785, 786 a	Maurer v. Mitchell, 9 W. & S. 69	
v. Pelletier, 82 N. C. 40			486, 515
	181, 199	Mauri v. Heffernan, 13 Johns. 58	761
v. Thompson, 18 Pick. 305	382	Maute v. Gross, 56 Penn. St. 250	914
v. Waite, 17 Mass. 560	723	Mavor v. Pyne, 3 Bing. 285	
v. Williams, 3 Munf. 126	158		711, 712, 748, 899
v. Wright, 13 Met. 306	67, 69	Mawman v. Gillett, 2 Taunt. 327	558
Mass. Gen. Hosp. v. Fairbanks,		Max v. Roberts, 12 East, 89	834
129 Mass. 78	707, 708	Maxim v. Morse, 8 Mass. 127	513
Massey v. Johnson, 1 Ex. 241		Maxton v. Gheen, 75 Penn. St.	
	996, 999	166	453
v. Sladen, L. R. 4 Ex. 13	886	Maxwell v. Campbell, 8 Oh. St.	
v. Young, 73 Mo. 260	239	265	486
Massie v. Sebastian, 4 Bibb, 433	89	v. Griswold, 10 How. 242	
Masson v. Bovet, 1 Denio, 69			149, 737
	233, 285, 287, 288, 289, 919	v. Thompson, 15 S. C.	
Master v. Miller, 4 T. R. 320; 2 H.		612	661
Bl. 141	247, 696, 700, 836	May v. Coffin, 4 Mass. 341	199, 201
Matchin v. Matchin, 6 Barr, 332	113 a	v. Gamble, 14 Fla. 467	956
Matheny v. Mason, 73 Mo. 677;		v. May, 1 C. & P. 44	816
12 Rep. 627	230	v. Skey, 16 Sim. 588	86
Mather, ex parte, 3 Ves. 373	339	v. Union Tel. Co., 112 Mass.	
v. Maidstone, 18 C. B. 273;		90	1046
. 1 C. B. N. S. 273	505, 539	Maybin v. Coulson, 4 Dall. 298;	
Mathers v. Pearson, 13 S. & R.		4 Yeates, 24	445
258	730	Mayd v. Field, L. R. 3 Ch. D. 587	77
Mathews v. Cowan, 59 Ill. 341	53	Mayer v. Dwinell, 29 Vt. 298	620
Mathewson v. Fitch, 22 Cal. 86	429	v. Isaac, 6 M. & W. 605	670
Mathias v. Yetts, 46 L. T. N. S.		v. McLure, 36 Miss. 389	63
497	241	v. New York, 63 N. Y. 455	
Mathis v. Bryson, 4 Jones L. 508	1000		196, 753
Matlock v. Gibson, 8 Rich. L. 437	495	v. Nias, 1 Bing. 311	955
v. Todd, 19 Ind. 130	245	Mayfield v. Wadsley, 3 B. & C.	
Matteson v. Holt, 45 Vt. 336	284, 288	357; 5 D. & R. 224	
v. Noyes, 25 Ill. 591	27		338, 511
Matthewman's case, L. R. 3 Eq.		v. Wheeler, 37 Tex. 256	25 a
781	77	Mayhew v. Ins. Co., 23 Mich. 105	150
Matthews v. Baxter, L. R. 8 Exch.		v. Thayer, 8 Gray, 172	
132	102, 107, 118, 119,		86, 92
	120, 122, 154	Maynard v. Eaton, L. R. 9 Ch.	
v. Bliss, 22 Pick. 48		414	287
	217, 236, 242, 246, 254	v. Ins. Co., 34 Cal. 48;	
v. Hartson, 3 Pitts. 86	221	47 Cal. 207	131
v. Houghton, 1 Fairf.		v. Maynard, 49 Vt. 297	254
420	1038	Mayo v. Carrington, 19 Grat. 74	165
v. McStea, 91 U. S. 7		Mayor v. Hughes, 1 G. & J. 480	
	473, 476		763, 809
v. Smith, 67 N. C. 374	496	v. Lefferman, 4 Gill, 425	150

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Mayor v. Ray, 19 Wall. 468	138, 143	Meeker v. Claghorn, 44 N. Y. 349	811
v. Yuille, 3 Ala. 137	143	Meeks v. Dewberry, 57 Ga. 263	427
Mayor of Alexandria v. Patten, 4		Megrath v. Gray, L. R. 9 C. P.	
Cranch, 317	927, 932	216	1025
Mayor of N. Y. v. Erben, 38 N. Y.		Meguire v. Corwine, 101 U. S. 108	
305	75, 181, 197, 199	402, 403, 407, 427	
Mayor of Norwich v. R. R., 4 E. &		Mehan v. Thompson, 71 Me. 492	954
B. 397	337, 363	Mehlberg v. Tisher, 24 Wis. 607	
Mays v. Dwight, 82 Penn. St. 462	208	956, 958	
v. Williams, 27 Ala. 267	868	Meiley v. Butler, 26 Oh. St. 535	89
Maze v. Miller, 1 Wash. C. C. 328	999	Melchert v. Tel. Co., Cir. Ct. Iowa,	
Meacham v. Dow, 32 Vt. 721	407	1882; 11 Fed. Rep. 193	453
Mead v. Bunn, 32 N. Y. 275	227, 245	Melendy v. Capen, 120 Mass. 222	515
v. Combs, 19 N. J. Eq. 112	511	v. Keen, 89 Ill. 395	243
v. Dayton, 28 Conn. 33	843	Melhado v. Porto Alegre R. R., L.	
v. Degolyer, 16 Wend. 632	899	R. 9 C. P. 503	808
Meader v. Norton, 11 Wal. 442	289	Melick v. Dayton, 34 N. J. Eq. 245	
v. White, 66 Me. 90		190, 518, 899, 902	
382, 384, 389		Melledge v. Boston Iron Co., 5	
Meadows v. Cozart, 76 N. C. 450	893	Cush. 158	134, 954, 956
Means v. Milliken, 33 Penn. St.		Mellen v. Boarman, 13 Sm. & M.	
517	833	100	1026
Meares, in re, L. R. 10 Ch. D. 552		v. Moore, 68 Me. 390	810 a
101, 121		v. Whipple, 1 Gray, 317	
Meason v. Kaine, 63 Penn. St. 335	3	507, 784, 786, 786 a, 794	
v. Kaine, 67 Penn. St.		Mellish v. Robertson, 25 Vt. 603	198
126	814	Mellon v. Mulvey, 8 C. E. Green,	
Mechanics' Bank v. Bank, 5 Wheat.		198	377
326	269, 275	Melvin v. Proprietors, 5 Met.	
v. Debolt, 1 Oh.		(Mass.) 15	670
St. 591	1063	Memphis v. U. S., 97 U. S. 293	1062
v. Griswold, 7		Memphis, etc. R. R. v. Neighbors,	
Wend. 165	573	51 Miss. 412	284
v. Man. Co., 33		v. Tennessee,	
N. J. Eq. 486	232 a	101 U. S.	
v. R. R., 13 N.		337	1067
Y. 599	135	Menasha v. Hazard, 102 U. S. 81	141
v. Wixson, 42 N.		Mendenhall v. Treadway, 44 Ind.	
Y. 438	532	131	291
Mechanics' Banking Co. v. White		Menetone v. Athawes, 3 Burr. 1592	
Lead Co., 35 N. Y. 505	138	326, 714	
Mechanics' Sav. Inst. v O'Conner,		Menges v. Oyster, 4 W. & S. 20	198
29 Oh. St. 651	230	Menkins v. Lightner, 18 Ill. 282	119
Mecke v. Ins. Co., 8 Phila. 6	286, 288	Mennett v. Bonham, 15 East, 477	475
Meckley's Estate, 20 Penn. St.		Menomonee v. Langworthy, 18	
478	181	Wis. 444	205
Mecorney v. Stanley, 8 Cush. 85		Mercantile Bank v. Gladstone, L.	
532, 536		R. 3 Ex. 233	805
Medbury v. Watrous, 7 Hill, 110		Mercantile Ins. Co. v. Jaynes, 87	
42, 48		Ill. 199	205
v. Watson, 6 Met. 246	260	Mercein v. People, 25 Wend. 64	400
Medeiros v. Hill, 8 Bing. 231	311	v. Smith, 2 Hill, N. Y.	
Medina v. Stoughton, 1 Ld. Raym.		210	1022, 1026
593	219	Mercer Co. v. Coover, 6 W. & S.	
Medomak Bank v. Curtis, 24 Me.		70	594
36	856, 865	v. Hacket, 1 Wall. 83	797
Medsker v. Richardson, 72 Ind.		v. R. R., 27 Penn. St.	
323	719	389	14
Meek v. Atkinson, 1 Bailey, 84	150	Merchant v. Chapman, 4 Allen,	
v. Perry, 36 Miss. 190	161	362	877

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Merchant Banking Co. v. Bessemer Steel Co., L. R. 5 Ch. D. 205	847	Mershon v. Hobensack, 2 Zab. 372	327, 833
Merchants', etc. Bk. v. Bangs, 102 Mass. 291	878	Mertens v. Nottebohm, 4 Grat. 163	774
v. Hewitt, 3 Iowa, 93	793	Merwin v. Arbuckle, 81 Ill. 501	214, 240, 241, 259
v. Livingston, 74 N. Y. 223	796	Meserve v. Bacon, 125 Mass. 499	784
v. McIntyre, 2 Sandf. 431	197	Mesnil v. Dakin, L. R. 3 Q. B. 18	737
v. R. R., 69 N. Y. 373	793	Messer v. Oestreich, 52 Wis. 684	899
v. Spalding, 5 Selden, 53	445	Messmore v. Larson, 86 Ill. 268	1017
v. Spicer, 6 Wend. 443	953	v. Shot Co., 40 N. Y. 422	916
v. State Bank, 10 Wall. 604	133, 141	Messner v. Lancaster Co., 23 Penn. St. 291	869
Merchants' Despatch Co. v. Theilbar, 86 Ill. 71	196	Metcalf v. Cook, 2 R. I. 355	77
Meredith v. Crawford, 34 Ind. 399	34	v. Putnam, 9 Allen, 97	242
v. Footner, 11 M. & W. 202	84	v. Taylor, 36 Me. 28	635
Merriam v. Cunningham, 11 Cush. 40	52, 67, 69, 74	Metcalf v. Ironworks Co., L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 613; 2 Q. B. D. 423	715
v. Field, 24 Wis. 640	223, 903	Metcalf's Trusts, in re, 2 De G. J. & S. 122	167
v. Lapsley, 12 Fed. Rep. 457	254	Methodist Assoc. v. Sharp, 6 Mo. Ap. 150	528
v. R. R., 117 Mass. 241	78, 89	Methodist Ep. Church v. Garvey, 53 Ill. 401	528
v. Stearns, 10 Cush. 257	382	Metropolitan Bk. v. Godfrey, 23 Ill. 579	201
v. Wolcott, 3 Allen, 258	744	v. Taylor, 62 Mo. 338	77
Merrick v. Coal Co., 61 Ill. 472	720	v. Van Dyck, 27 N. Y. 400	984
v. R. R., 11 Iowa, 74	130	Metropolitan R. R. Co. v. Defries, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 189	286
Merrill v. Bell, 6 Sm. & M. 730	547	Metters v. Brown, 1 H. & C. 686	684
v. Downs, 41 N. H. 72	382	Metzgar v. Metzgar, 1 Rawle, 227	842, 1017
v. Ins. Co., 73 N. Y. 452; aff'g 10 Hun. 428	338 a	Metzner v. Bolton, 9 Exch. 518	718
v. R. R., 16 Wend. 586	1032	Meyer v. Dresser, 16 C. B. N. S. 646	1009, 1029
Merrills v. Swift, 18 Conn. 257	107 a, 677	v. Haworth, 8 A. & E. 467	512
Merrimack Bk. v. Brown, 12 N. H. 320	925	v. Lathrop, 73 N. Y. 315	957
Merriman v. Chapman, 32 Conn. 146	916	v. Lowell, 44 Mo. 328	785, 786, 853
v. Moore, 90 Penn. St. 78	785, 786, 853	v. Peck, 33 Barb. 532	793
Merritt v. Brown, 6 C. E. Green, 401	888, 890	v. Yesser, 32 Ind. 294	243
v. Horne, 5 Oh. St. 307	74	Meynell v. Surtees, 25 L. J. C. 257	12
v. Lambert, 10 Paige, 352	161	Michael v. Bacon, 49 Mo. 474	341, 345
v. Millard, 4 Keyes, 208	352	Michaels v. R. R., 30 N. Y. 564	309
Merryweather v. Nixan, 8 T. R. 186	765, 771	Michel v. Tinsley, 69 Mo. 442	206
		Michener v. Dale, 23 Penn. St. 59	814
		Michigan, etc. R. R. v. Dunham, 30 Mich. 128	285
		v. Phillips, 60 Ill. 190	793
		Michigan State Bk. v. Peck, 28 Vt. 200	202
		Michoud v. Girod, 4 How. 503	161, 289

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Middleborough v. Rochester, 12 Mass. 363	113	Miller v. Fletcher, 27 Grat. 403	679
Middlebury College v. Chandler, 16 Vt. 683	68	v. Gilleland, 19 Penn. St. 119	700
v. Loomis, 1 Vt. 189	529	v. Goddard, 34 Me. 102	716, 717
Middleport Mills v. Titus, 35 Oh. St. 253	742	v. Hatch, 72 Me. 481	997, 1003
Middlesex v. Thomas, 5 C. E. Green, 39	620, 938, 956	v. Heller, 7 S. & R. 32	553
Middlesex, etc. R. R. v. Boston R. R., 115 Mass. 347	137, 139	v. Kendig, 55 Iowa, 174	3
Middleton's case, Dyer, 332 b	416	v. Kreiter, 76 Penn. St. 78	1021
Middleton v. Pollock, L. R. 20 Eq. 29	1010	v. Lash, 85 N. C. 51	719
Miffin v. Com., 5 W. & S. 461	371	v. McClain, 10 Yerg. 245	619, 623, 891, 981, 990
Milburn v. Guyther, 8 Gill, 92	1021	v. Miller, 23 Me. 22	933
Mildmay v. Hungerford, 2 Vern. 243	198	v. Miller, 7 Pick. 133	724, 730, 731
Miles v. Bough, 3 Ad. & Kl. (N. S.) 845	180	v. Miller, 68 Penn. St. 486	144, 147, 149, 150
v. Furber, L. R. 8 Q. B. 77	6, 249	v. Miller, 16 Ill. 296	719
v. Gorton, 2 C. & M. 504	959	v. Morris, 5 Tex. L. J. 113	318
v. Lingerian, 24 Ind. 385	89	v. Morse, 23 Mich. 365	206
v. Roberts, 34 N. H. 245	872, 990, 992	v. Newton, 23 Cal. 554	77
v. Stevens, 3 Barr, 21	186, 205	v. Phillips, 31 Penn. St. 218	282, 895
v. Wheeler, 43 Ill. 124	161	v. Post, 1 Allen, 434	360, 365
Mill v. Hawker, L. R. 9 Ex. 309 ; 10 Ex. 92	131	v. Proctor, 20 Oh. St. 442	264
Mill Dam Foundery v. Hovey, 21 Pick. 417	311, 328, 554, 557, 558, 579, 585, 606	v. Receiver, 1 Paige, 444	1026
Millar v. Craig, 6 Beav. 433	1035	v. Reed, 27 Penn. St. 244	700
Millard v. Bailey, L. R. 1 Eq. 378	635	v. Sauerbier, 30 N. J. Eq. 71	376
v. Harvey, 34 Beav. 237	84	v. Sawyer, 30 Vt. 412	765
v. Hewlett, 19 Wend. 301	56, 63	v. Sims, 2 Hill (S. C.), 479	40, 58
v. Morse, 32 Penn. St. 506	871	v. Stewart, 4 Wash. C. C. 26	695, 698
Miller's App., 30 Penn. St. 478	408, 409	v. The Resolution, 2 Dall. 1	473
Miller's case, L. R. 3 C. D. 391	854, 864	v. Tiffany, 1 Wall. 298	463
Miller v. Atlee, 3 Ex. 799	722	v. Trevilian, 2 Rob. Va. 2	923
v. Ballard, 46 Ill. 377	528	v. Ward, 2 Conn. 494	603, 712
v. Barber, 66 N. Y. 558	242, 290	v. Williamson, 5 Md. 219	77
v. Billingsly, 41 Ind. 489	785	v. Winchell, 70 N. Y. 437	786a
v. Bomberger, 76 Penn. St. 78	845	v. Woodfall, 8 E. & B. 493	805
v. Cherry, 3 Jones, Eq. 24	668	Millership v. Brookes, 5 H. & N. 797	679
v. Cook, L. R. 10 Eq. 641	169, 170	Millett v. Marston, 62 Me. 477	5
v. Covert, 1 Wend. 487	936	Millican v. Millican, 24 Tex. 426	157
v. Craig, 36 Ill. 109	107, 110	Milligan v. Cooke, 16 Ves. 1	186, 190
v. Drake, 1 Caines, 45	505	Milliken v. Brown, 1 Rawle, 391	504, 831, 935, 998, 1001, 1002
v. Edwards, 7 Bush, 394	91, 537	v. Thorndike, 103 Mass. 382	243
v. Finley, 26 Mich. 249	108, 118, 700	v. Tufts, 31 Me. 497	933
		Mills v. Barber, 1 M. & W. 425	539
		v. Bayley, 2 H. & C. 36	593
		v. Catlin, 22 Vt. 98	670
		v. East London Union, L. R. 8 C. P. 79	305
		v. Fowkes, 5 Bing. N. C. 455	923, 929, 930
		v. Gore, 20 Pick. 28	679
		v. Hyde, 19 Vt. 59	765
		v. Ladbroke, 7 M. & G. 218	816

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Mills v. Mills, 26 Conn. 213	161	Mitchell v. Sanford, 11 Ala. 695	740
v. Mills, 40 N. Y. 543	402, 403	v. Scott, 41 Mich. 108	716
v. Murry, 1 Neb. 327	836	v. Sellman, 5 Md. 376	1028
v. Starr, 2 Bailey, 359	695	v. Smith, 1 Binn. 110; 4	
v. Williams, 11 Ired. 558	1066	Dall. 269	360, 363, 365
v. Wyman, 3 Pick. 207	512	v. Sproul, 5 J. J. Marsh.	
Millward v. Littlewood, 5 Ex. 775	324	264	765
Milmine v. Burnham, 76 Ill. 362	205	v. Vance, 5 T. B. Mon. 528	502
Miln v. Prest, 4 Camp. 393	599	v. Wheaton, 46 Conn.	
Milne v. Huber, 3 McLean, 212	368	315	1001
Milner v. Harewood, 18 Ves. 259	73	v. Winslow, 2 Story, 630	
Milnes v. Duncan, 6 B. & C. 671	196		739, 842
v. Gery, 14 Ves. 400	593	v. Worden, 20 Barb. 253	258
Miltenberger v. Cooke, 18 Wal.		Mittelholzer v. Fullarton, 6 Q. B.	
421	346	989, 1022	337
Minard v. Mead, 7 Wend. 68	84	Mixer v. Coburn, 11 Met. 559	224
Miner v. Bradley, 22 Pick. 457		Mizell v. Burnett, 4 Jones, N. C.	
233, 285, 290, 712, 748,	919	249	329, 547
v. Hess, 47 Ill. 170	208	Mizen v. Pick, 3 M. & W. 481	88
v. Medbury, 6 Wis. 295	241	Mizner v. Kussell, 29 Mich. 229	248
Miners' Ditch Co. v. Zellerbach,		Moakes v. Nicolson, 19 C. B. N.	
37 Cal. 543	140	S. 290	877, 878
Mingus v. Pritchett, 3 Dev. 78		Mobile, etc. R. R. v. Clanton, 59	
	872, 990, 992	Ala. 392	1016, 1029
Minis v. McDowell, 4 Ga. 182	954	Mockbee v. Gardner, 2 Har. & G.	
Minnesota Oil Co. v. Lead Co., 4		176	230
Dill. 431	18, 27	Mody v. Gregson, L. R. 4 Ex. 49	
Minot v. Curtis, 7 Mass. 441	134		225, 914, 918
Minturn v. Larue, 23 How. 435	143	Moens v. Heyworth, 10 M. & W.	
Mirick v. French, 2 Gray, 420	528	147	214, 241, 259
Missouri Valley Co. v. Bushnell,		Moeser v. Wisker, L. R. 6 C. P.	
11 Neb. 192	140, 243	120	743
Mitchel v. Reynolds, 1 P. Wms.		Moffat v. Parsons, 5 Taunt. 307	
181	430, 431		980, 982
Mitchell v. Cragg, 10 M. & W. 367		v. Van Millingen, 2 B. &	
	935, 997	P. 124 n.	806
v. Dall, 2 Har. & G. 159;		v. Winslow, 7 Paige, 124	288
4 Gill & J. 361	924	Moffatt v. Dickson, 13 C. B. 543	591
v. Gile, 12 N. H. 390	963	Mogford v. Courtenay, 45 L. T.	
v. Gregory, 1 Bibb, 449	619	N. S. 303	435
v. Homfray, L. R. 8 Q.		Mohawk Bridge v. R. R., 6 Paige,	
B. D. 587; 45 L. T. N.		554	1064
S. 694	161, 168	Mohney v. Evans, 51 Penn. St.	
v. Jones, 50 Mo. 438		80	69, 92
	165, 166, 518	Moist's App., 74 Penn. St. 166	719
v. King, 6 C. & P. 237	977	Moley v. Brine, 120 Mass. 324	40
v. Kingman, 5 Pick. 431		Moline Co. v. Beed, 52 Iowa, 307	10
	100, 119	Moller v. Lambert, 2 Camp. 548	803
v. Kintzer, 5 Barr, 216	204	Mollett v. Robinson, L. R. 5 C. P.	
v. Lapage, Holt, N. P.		646	378
253	180, 184	v. Wackerbarth, 5 C. B.	
v. McDougall, 62 Ill. 498		181	696
	250, 251, 253	Molony v. Rourke, 100 Mass. 190	199
v. McMullen, 59 Mo. 252	230	Molton v. Camroux, 2 Exch. 487;	
v. Merrill, 2 Blackf. 87	869	4 Exch. 17	102, 106, 111
v. Moore, 24 Iowa, 394	285	v. Martin, 43 Ala. 651	77
v. Newhall, 15 M. & W.		Moncrieff v. Goldsborough, 4 H.	
308	562, 746	& McH. 281	267
v. Ryan, 3 Oh. St. 377		Mondel v. Steel, 8 M. & W. 858	
	107 a, 677		330, 748

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Monell v. Burns, 4 Denio, 121	717	Moore v. Garwood, 4 Exch. 681	647
Moniteau Bk. v. Miller, 73 Mo.		v. Hershey, 90 Penn. St.	
187	930	196	103, 108
Monnin v. Beroujon, 51 Ala. 196	192	v. Holland, 39 Me. 307	648
Monroe v. Smith, 79 Penn. St. 459	377	v. Holt, 3 Ten. Ch. 248	289
Montague v. Benedict, 3 B. & C.		v. Ins. Co., 28 Grat. 508	338 a
681	84, 86	v. Moore, 127 Mass. 22	
v. Sewell, 57 Md. 407	461		728, 784
v. Smith, 13 Mass. 396	799	v. Murdock, 26 Cal. 514	382
Montgomerie v. Ivers, 17 Johns.		v. Pyrke, 11 East, 52	723
38	774, 779	v. R. R., L. R. 8 Q. B. 36	131
Montgomery v. Kellogg, 43 Miss.		v. Rush, 30 La. An. 1157	144
486	570	v. Russell, 2 Bibb, 442	833
v. Lampton, 3 Met.		v. Turbeville, 2 Bibb, 602	
(Ky.) 519	513, 1032		244, 245
v. Montgomery, 3		v. Waldo, 69 Mo. 277	554
Barb. Ch. 132	265	v. Wingate, 53 Mo. 398	210
v. Pickering, 116		v. Wood, 100 Ill. 451	376
Mass. 227		Moorhouse v. Woolfe, 46 L. T. N.	
	154, 168, 285	S. 374	283
v. Plank Road, 31		Moorman v. Collier, 32 Ind. 138	198
Ala. 76	129	Moral School v. Harrison, 74 Ind.	
v. Robinson, 85 Ill.		93	287
174	24	Moran v. McLarty, 75 N. Y. 25	208
v. Shockey, 37 Iowa,		v. Miami Co., 2 Black, 722	
107	198		137, 138
v. U. S., 15 Wall.		Morancy v. Quarles, 1 McLean,	
395	352, 473	194	1035
Montgomery Co. v. Am. Emigrant		Mordaunt v. Moncrieffe, L. R. 2	
Co., 47 Iowa, 91	181	H. L. (Sc.) 374	113 a
Montrion v. Jefferys, 2 C. & P.		v. Mordaunt, L. R. 2	
113	264	P. 103, 382	113 a
Montz v. Morris, 89 Penn. St. 392	1021	Mordis v. Kennedy, 23 Kan. 408	953
Monument Bank v. Globe Works,		More v. Bonnet, 40 Cal. 251	433, 580
101 Mass. 57	137, 138, 141	Morecock v. Dickins, Amb. 678	367
Monumental Building Assoc. v.		Morehead v. Eades, 3 Bush, 121	260
Herman, 33 Md. 128	36	v. Hunt, 1 Dev. Eq. 35	267
Moody v. Blake, 117 Mass. 23		Morehouse v. Comstock, 42 Wis.	
	183, 283, 291,	626	562
	292, 733, 734, 736	Moreland v. Atchison, 19 Tex. 303	
v. Mahurin, 4 N. H. 296			199, 264
	984, 985	v. Davidson, 71 Penn.	
v. Sewall, 14 Me. 295	814	St. 371	708, 757
v. Wiley, Sup. Ct. Ky.		Morell v. Coddington, 4 Allen, 403	810 a
1881; 13 Rep. 13	785	Morgan v. Bain, L. R. 10 C. P. 15	293
Moon v. Durden, 2 Ex. 22	451	v. Bank, 14 Conn. 99	76
Mooney v. Miller, 102 Mass. 217		v. Bank, 8 S. & R. 73	1026
	244, 245, 257, 259	v. Beaumont, 121 Mass. 7	452
Moore's case, L. R. 18 Eq. 661		v. Birnie, 9 Bing. 672	594
	255, 282	v. Bliss, 2 Mass. 111	243
Moore v. Adams, 8 Ohio, 372	340	v. Elford, L. R. 4 C. D.	
v. Briggs, 15 Ala. 24	955	352	723, 731
v. Bushell, 27 L. J. Ex. 3	728	v. Gath, 3 H. & C. 748	898
v. Cains, 116 Mass. 396	249	v. McKee, 77 Penn. St. 228	
v. Campbell, 10 Ex. 323			284, 552, 580
	661, 902	v. Minett, L. R. 6 C. D.	
v. Coughlin, 4 Allen, 335	837	638	161
v. Davidson, 18 Ala. 209	870	v. Mining Co., 37 Cal. 534	785
v. Fitzwater, 2 Rand. Va.		v. Palmer, 2 B. & C. 729	738
442	533	v. R. R. Co., 63 Mo. 129	230

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Morgan v. Skiddy, 62 N. Y.	319	Morrison v. Berkey, 7 S. & R.	238
	242 a, 277		758, 768
Morison v. Thompson, L. R. 9 Q.		v. Cummings, 26 Vt.	486
B. 480	260, 730	v. Davis, 20 Penn. St.	171
Moritz v. Melhorn, 13 Penn. St.			309, 310, 319
331	2	v. Deaderick, 10 Humph.	
Morland v. Isaac, 20 Beav.	389	342	424, 429
Morley v. Attenborough, 3 Ex.		v. Ins. Co., L. R. 8 Ex.	
500	230	197; rev'g 8 Ex. 40	
v. Boothby, 3 Bing. 107		245, 284, 286, 287, 289	
	505, 536	v. Ins. Co., 18 Mo.	262
v. Frear, 6 Bing. 547	1037	v. Koch, 32 Wis.	254
v. Rennoldson, 2 Hare,		v. Lods, 39 Cal.	381
570	396	v. McLeod, 2 Dev. & B.	
Morrell v. Cowan, L. R. 6 Ch. D.		Eq. 221	119
166	77	v. Moreland, 15 S. & R.	
v. Quarles, 35 Ala.	544	61	1012
Morrill v. Aden, 19 Vt.	505	v. Smith, 81 Ill.	221
v. Blackman, 42 Conn.		v. Wilson, 13 Cal.	494
324	249, 258	Morriss v. Harveys, 75 Va.	726
v. Wallace, 9 N. H.	111	Morrow v. Bright, 20 Mo.	298
	187, 219, 260	v. Campbell, 7 Port.	41
Morris's Estate, L. R. 10 Ch.	68	v. Rees, 69 Penn. St.	368
Morris v. Blackman, 2 Hurl. & C.			285, 287, 919
912	458	v. Starke, 4 J. J. Marsh.	
v. Bowman, 12 Gray,	467	367	950
v. Clay, 8 Jones N. C.	216	v. Waltz, 18 Penn. St.	
v. Colman, 18 Ves.	437	118	4, 570
v. Eves, 11 Mart.	730	Morse v. Bellows, 7 N. H.	549
v. Levison, L. R. 1 C. P. D.		v. Brackett, 98 Mass.	205;
155	902	104 Mass.	494
v. MacCulloch, 2 Eden,	190		189, 233, 285, 748
	345, 353	v. Goold, 1 Kern.	281
v. Morris, Wright (Ohio)		v. R. R., 6 Gray,	450
630	265	v. Royal, 12 Ves.	355
v. Munroe, 30 Ga.	630	v. Shattuck, 4 N. H.	229
v. Norfolk, 1 Taunt.	212		540, 683
v. Phelps, 5 Johns.	49	v. Shaw, 124 Mass.	59
v. Ruddy, 5 C. E. Green,		v. Wheeler, 4 Allen,	570
236	945	Morse Drill Co. v. Morse,	103 Mass.
v. Sliter, 1 Denio,	59	73	433, 436
v. Thompson, 85 Ill.	16	Morss v. Salisbury, 48 N. Y.	636
	224, 230, 251	Mortimer v. Bell, L. R. 1 Ch. Ap.	
v. Ziegler, 71 Penn. St.		10	267
450	377	v. M'Callan, 6 M. & W.	
Morris Canal Co. v. Emmett, 9		58	269
Paige,	168	v. Shortall, 2 Dr. & War.	
	190, 242, 246	363	208
v. Ryerson, 27		Mortimore v. Wright, 6 M. & W.	
N. J. L.	457	482	512
	540, 683	Morton v. Burn, 7 A. & E.	19
v. Van Vorst,			4, 531, 708, 710
1 Zab.	101	v. Chandler, 7 Greenl.	44
	999	v. Lamb, 7 T. R.	125
Morris, etc. R. R. v. Sussex R. R.,			584, 605
20 N. J. Eq.	542	v. Naylor, 1 Hill, N. Y.	
	129, 141	583	839
Morris Run Coal Co. v. Barclay		v. Scull, 23 Ark.	289
Coal Co., 68 Penn. St.	173	v. Steward, 5 Ill. Ap.	533
Morris v. Philliber, 30 Mo.	145	v. Tibbett, 15 Q. B.	428
	166, 518		711
Morrison v. Beckey, 6 Watts,	349		
	785		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Morville v. American Tract Soc., 123 Mass. 129	137, 142	Muirhead v. Kirkpatrick, 21 Penn. St. 237	532, 533
Moseley v. Vanhooser, 6 Lea (Tenn.) 286	384	Mulholland v. Bartlett, 74 Ill. 58	535
Moser v. Hoch, 3 Barr, 230	230	Mullen v. Morris, 2 Barr, 85	463
Moses v. Bagley, 55 Ga. 283	427	v. Park, 64 Ind. 202	259
v. Macferlan, 2 Burr. 1005	722, 751	Muller v. Eno, 14 N. Y. 597	140
v. Mead, 1 Denio, 378		v. Rhuman, 62 Ga. 332	208
222, 224, 225, 905, 912, 914	42	Mullett v. Hook, 1 M. & Mal. 88	833
v. Stevens, 2 Pick. 332	129, 138	Mulliner v. R. R., L. R. 11 Ch. D. 611	135
Moss v. Averell, 10 N. Y. 449	654	Mulock v. Mulock, 31 N. J. Eq. 594	158
v. Bainbrigge, 18 Beav. 478	810 a	Mundorff v. Wickersham, 61 Penn. St. 87	131, 269, 270
v. Livingston, 4 Comst. 208	265	Munger v. Munger, 33 N. H. 581	719
v. Moss, 2 Ired. 55	748	Munhall v. R. R., 92 Penn. St. 150	442 a
v. Printing Co., 64 Ind. 125	997	Munn v. Baker, 2 Stark. 226	670
v. Shannon, 1 Hilt. 175	304	v. Illinois, 94 U. S. 113	1064
v. Smith, 9 C. B. 94	590	Munro v. Butt, 8 E. & B. 738	719
v. Sweet, 16 Q. B. 493	106, 118	Munroe v. Eastman, 31 Mich. 283	698
v. Tribe, 3 F. & F. 297	719	v. Perkins, 9 Pick. 298	500, 1032
Mosteller's App., 30 Penn. St. 473		v. Pritchett, 16 Ala. 785	214
Mostyn v. West Mostyn Coal Co., L. R. 1 C. P. D. 145	249, 632, 1016	Munsell v. Loree, 21 Mich. 491	3
Mott v. Comstock, 8 Wend. 544	88	Munsey v. Goodwin, 3 N. H. 272	730
v. Harrington, 12 Vt. 199	161, 378	Munson v. Osborn, 10 Ill. Ap. 508	665
v. Hicks, 1 Cow. 513	138, 810 a	Murdoch v. Finney, 21 Mo. 138	778
v. Mott, 11 Barb. 127	433	Murphy v. Bank, 5 Ala. 421	820
Motz v. Mitchell, 91 Penn. St. 114	144, 149	v. Glass, L. R. 2 P. C. 408	1024
Mouflet v. Cole, L. R. 8 Ex. 32	433	v. Hanrahan, 50 Wis. 485	854
Moulton v. Trask, 9 Met. 577	605, 712, 714, 716	v. Hubert, 16 Penn. St. 50	84, 376
Mountstephen v. Brooke, 1 B. & Ald. 224	833	v. Simpson, 14 B. Mon. 419	382
Mouton v. Noble, 1 La. An. 192	528	v. U. S., 14 Ct. of Cl. 508	996
Mowatt v. Londesborough, 4 E. & B. 1	742	v. Webber, 61 Me. 478	930
v. McClelan, 1 Wend. 173	755	Murray v. Ballou, 1 Johns. Ch. 566	347
Mowry v. Adams, 14 Mass. 327	768	v. Blatchford, 1 Wend. 583	821, 947
v. Bishop, 5 Paige, 98	776	v. Bogert, 14 Johns. 318	767, 835
v. Todd, 12 Mass. 281	840	v. Carlin, 67 Ill. 286	102, 117 a
Moxon v. Payne, L. R. 8 Ch. 881	161, 168	v. Carret, 3 Call, 373	297
Moyce v. Newington, L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 32	291	v. Charleston, 96 U. S. 432	1062, 1063
Moyer v. Mitchell, 53 Md. 171	318	v. Dake, 46 Cal. 644	208
Mozley v. Alston, 1 Phillips Ch. 790	139	v. East India Co., 5 B. & Ald. 204	135
v. Tinkler, 1 C. M. & R. 692	17, 570	v. Harway, 56 N. Y. 337	856
Muckleroy v. Bethany, 27 Tex. 551	698	v. Lylburn, 2 Johns. Ch. 441	842
Mudd v. Reeves, 2 Har. & J. 368	744, 960	v. Mann, 2 Exch. 538	236, 263, 270
Mudge v. Oliver, 1 Allen, 74	180	v. Mumford, 6 Cow. 441	820
Muhlig v. Fiske, 131 Mass. 110	721		
Muir v. Schenck, 3 Hill, N. Y. 228	845		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Murray v. Palmer, 2 Sch. & L.		Napier v. McLeod, 9 Wend.	120
474	516		821, 950
v. Parker, 19 Beav. 305	208	Narragansett Bank v. Silk Co., 3	
v. Pinkett, 12 Cl. & F.		Met. (Mass.) 282	138
764	842	Nash v. Drisco, 51 Me. 417	631, 647
v. Shanklin, 4 Dev. & B.		v. Hodgson, 6 De G. M. &	
289	63	G. 474	924, 930
v. Stair, 2 B. & C. 82; 3		v. Lull, 102 Mass. 60	516, 748
D. & R. 278	677, 679	v. Mitchell, 71 N. Y. 199	78
v. Vanderbilt, 39 Barb.		v. Skinner, 12 Vt. 219	833
140	357, 725	v. Towne, 5 Wall. 689	657
Murrell v. Jones, 40 Miss. 565	841	Nashville, etc. R. R. v. David, 6	
Murry v. Smith, 1 Hawks, 41	882	Heisk. 261	309
Musgrove v. Gibbs, 1 Dall. 216		v. Estis, 7	
	250, 467, 1006	Heisk. 622	319
Musselman v. Cravens, 47 Ind. 1	102	Nason v. Dinsmore, 34 Me. 391	
v. Stoner, 31 Penn.			390, 391
St. 265	990, 992	Natcher v. Natcher, 47 Penn. St.	
Mussen v. Price, 4 East, 147	549	496	751
Mussey v. Beecher, 3 Cush. 511	278	Natchez v. Mallery, 54 Miss. 499	143
v. Rayner, 22 Pick. 223		National Bk. v. Grand Lodge, 98	
	515, 570	U. S. 123	784, 785
v. White, 3 Greenl. 290	141	v. Hall, 101 U. S.	
Mustard v. Wohlford, 15 Grat.		43	4
329	36, 38, 45	v. Matthews, 98 U.	
Mutual Ins. Co. v. Cannon, 48 Ind.		S. 621	140, 142
264	269	v. Whitney, 103 U.	
v. Hunt, 79 N. Y.		S. 99	142
541; 14 Hun, *		Nat. Exch. Co. v. Drew, 2 Macq.	
169	106	103	133, 214, 270, 273, 275
v. Noyes, 32 N. H.		Nat. Fire Ins. Co. v. Loomis, 11	
345	71	Paige, 431	267
v. Robertson, 59		Nat. Ins. Co. v. Allen, 116 Mass.	
Ill. 123	256	398	202
v. Ruse, 8 Ga. 534	298	Nat. Prov. Ass. Soc., in re, L. R.	
v. Wise, 34 Md.		9 Eq. 306	864
582	256	National Savings Bk. v. Tranah,	
Myatt v. Walker, 44 Ill. 485	103	L. R. 2 C. P. 556	958
Myers's App., 2 Barr, 463	378	National Trust Co. v. Gleason, 77	
Myers v. Baptist Soc., 38 Vt. 614	716	N. Y. 400	732
v. De Mier, 52 N. Y. 647	883	Natoma Co. v. Clarkin, 14 Cal.	
v. Hodges, 2 Watts, 381	409	543	140
v. James, 2 Lea, 159	91	Nave v. Berry, 22 Ala. 382	318
v. Meinrath, 101 Mass. 366		v. Wilson, 33 Ind. 294	936
	340, 383, 384	Navigation Co. v. Wilcox, 7 Jones	
v. Nell, 84 Penn. St. 369	700	L. 481	312
v. Sanders, 7 Dana, 506	45	Naylor v. Winch, 1 Sim. & St.	
Mynard v. R. R., 71 N. Y. 180	438	555	198
Myrick v. Jacks, 33 Ark. 425	285	Nazro v. Fuller, 24 Wend. 374	698
Myton v. Thurlow, 23 Kan. 212		Neal v. Gilmore, 79 Penn. St. 421	
	282, 283		505, 708, 719, 832
		Neale v. Ratcliffe, 15 Q. B. 916	586
N.		Nealley v. Moulton, 12 N. H.	
		485	833
Nace v. Boyer, 30 Penn. St. 99	158, 166	Nealon v. Henry, 131 Mass. 153	289
Naglee v. Palmer, 7 Cal. 431	1026	Neblett v. Macfarland, 92 U. S.	
Nance v. Lary, 5 Ala. 370	264	101	285
Napier v. Darlington, 70 Penn.		Needham v. Bremner, L. R. 1 C.	
St. 64	888	P. 683	87
		v. Heath, 17 Vt. 223	833

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Neef v. Redmon, S. C. Mo. 1881 ; 13 Rep. 434	2, 89	New England Ins. Co. v. Butler, 34 Me. 451	885 a
Neeley v. Anderson, 2 Strob. Eq. 262	104	New Hampshire Bk. v. Colcord, 15 N. H. 119	535
Neff v. Horner, 63 Penn. St. 327 696, 700, 722, 744		New Haven Bk. v. Mitchell, 15 Conn. 206	962
Negley v. Lindsay, 67 Penn. St. 217	283, 291	New Jersey State Ordinary v. Thatcher, 41 N. J. L. 403	679
Neil v. Case, 25 Kan. 510	698	New Jersey Zinc Co. v. Frank- linite Co., 15 N. J. Eq. 418	630
Neilson v. Blight, 1 Johns. Cas. 205	840	New Orleans v. City Hotel, 28 La. An. 423	1067
v. Harford, 8 M. & W. 806	631, 647	v. Davidson, 30 La. An. Part I. 541	1030
v. James, 46 L. T. N. S. 791	1046	New Orleans St. Joseph's Asso. v. Magnier, 16 La. An. 338	785
v. M'Donald, 6 Johns. Ch. 201	144, 147, 149	New Quebrada Co. v. Carr, L. R. 4 C. P. 651	1020
Neimeyer v. Knight, 98 Ill. 222	786	New Salem v. Wendall, 2 Pick. 341	757
Nellis v. Clark, 20 Wend. 24	235	New Sombrero Phosphate Co. v. Erlanger, L. R. 5 C. D. 73	161, 252, 254, 255 a
Nelson v. Bank, 48 Ill. 36	25 a	New York Bowery Ins. Co. v. Ins. Co., 17 Wend. 359	256
v. Davis, 40 Ind. 366	207, 208	New York Dock Co. v. Treadwell, 19 Wend. 525	830
v. Duncombe, 9 Beav. 211	106	New York Exchange Co. v. De Wolf, 31 N. Y. 273	529, 595
v. Eaton, 26 N. Y. 410	138	New York Firemen Ins. Co. v. Ely, 5 Conn. 560	143
v. Eaton, 1 Redfield, 498	33	New York Guaranty Co. v. Board, U. S. S. C. 1882; 4 Morris. Trans. 508	1067
v. Serle, 4 M. & W. 795	532	New York Life Ins. Co. v. Stat- ham, 93 U. S. 24	476
v. Stewart, 54 Ala. 115	512	N. Y., etc. R. R. v. Ketchum, 27 Conn. 170	720
v. Stocker, 4 De G. & J. 458	74	v. Schuyler, 34 N. Y. 30	135,
v. Von Bonnhorst, 29 Penn. St. 352	588	139, 237, 269, 275, 276	
v. Weeks, 111 Mass. 223	938	New York State Bk. v. Fletcher, 5 Wend. 85	1003
v. Wood, 62 Ala. 175	239, 282	New York Tel. Co. v. Dryburgh, 35 Penn. St. 298	190, 791, 1056
Nerot v. Wallace, 3 T. R. 17	505, 523	New York Trust Co. v. Helmer, 77 N. Y. 64	129
Nesbit v. Lockman, 34 N. Y. 167	427	New Zealand Co., ex parte, L. R. 3 Ch. 154	846
Nesbitt v. Berridge, 32 Beav. 282	169	Newall v. Tomlinson, L. R. 6 C. P. 405	752
v. Lushington, 4 T. R. 783	667	Newark Savings Inst. v. Forman, 33 N. J. Eq. 436	1067
v. Pearson, 33 Ala. 668	623	Newberry Bank v. Stegall, 41 Miss. 142	338
Nettleton v. Beach, 107 Mass. 499	740	Newbold v. Sims, 2 S. & R. 317	267
v. Billings, 13 N. H. 446	662	Newbury v. Armstrong, 6 Bing. 201	524
Nettman v. Schramm, 23 Iowa, 521	947	Newbury Co. v. Weare, 27 Oh. St. 343	140
Nevill v. Snelling, L. R. 15 Ch. D. 679	169		
Neville v. Kelly, 12 C. B. N. S. 740	24		
v. Wilkinson, 1 Bro. Ch. 543	242, 246		
Nevius v. Dunlap, 33 N. Y. 676	206, 207		
New v. Wambach, 42 Ind. 456	208		
New Brunswick, etc. Co. v. Cony- beare, 9 H. L. C. 711	273, 275		
New Brunswick, etc. R. R. v. Muggeridge, 1 Dr. & Sm. 363	255, 276		
New Brunswick Steamboat Co. v. Tiers, 4 Zab. 697	309		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Newby v. Rogers, 40 Ind.	9 895	Nichol v. Thomas, 53 Ind.	42
Newcomb v. Brackett, 16 Mass.			107, 111, 123
161	325, 567	Nicholl v. Bromley, 2 B. & B.	464 577
v. De Roos, 2 E. & E.		Nicholls v. Nicholls, 1 Atk.	409 144
271	18, 19	Nichols's case, 5 Coke, 43 a	1032
v. R. R., 115 Mass.	230 793	Nichols v. Alsop, 6 Conn.	477 778
v. Raynor, 21 Wend.		v. Coolahan, 10 Met.	449 717
108	821	v. Johnson, 10 Conn.	192 702
Newell v. Bank, L. R. 1 C. P. D.		v. Marsland, L. R. 10 Ex.	
496	1016, 1022	255 ; 2 Ex. D. 1	308, 310
v. Mayberry, 3 Leigh,	250 695	v. Mudgett, 32 Vt.	546 406
v. Radford, L. R. 3 C. P.		v. Nichols, 31 Vt.	328 113 a
52	202, 803	v. Whiting, 1 Root,	443 990
v. Salmons, 22 Barb.	647 1024	Nicholson v. Bradfield, L. R. 1 Q.	
v. Stiles, 21 Ga.	118 199	B. 620	128, 916
v. Van Praagh, L. R. 9		v. Chapman, 2 H. Bl.	
C.P. 96	1005	254	507
v. Wood, 1 Munf.	555 833	v. Gooch, 5 E. & B.	999 725
Newhall v. Holt, 6 M. & W.	662 776	v. Halsey, 1 Johns. Ch.	
v. Kingsbury, 131 Mass.		417	285
445	617	v. Revill, 4 A. & E.	
v. Paige, 10 Gray,	366 517	675 ; 6 N. & M.	200
v. Vargas, 13 Me.	93 878		831, 998
Newington v. Levy, L. R. 6 C. P.		Nickerson v. Gilliam, 29 Mo.	456 1112
180	1089	v. Hydraulic Co., 46	
Newkirk v. Cone, 18 Ill.	449 422	Conn. 24	786, 812
Newman v. Graham, 3 Munf.	187 833	Nicol's case, 3 D. & J.	387 242 a
v. Kershaw, 10 Wis.	333 463	Nicol v. Crittenden, 55 Ga.	497 291
v. Newman, 4 M. & S.		Nicoll v. Greaves, 17 C. B. N.S.	
66	338, 360	27	718
v. Perrill, 73 Ind.	153	v. Ins. Co., 3 Wood & M.	
	558, 607	529	652
v. Rogers, 4 Bro. C. C.		Nicolson v. Revell, 6 N. & M.	
391	887	200	831
v. Walters, 3 B. & P.		Niell v. Morley, 9 Ves.	478 101, 104
612	503	Nightingal v. Devisme, 5 Burr.	
Newmarch v. Clay, 14 East,	239 924	2589	723
Newry, etc. R. R. v. Coombe, 3		Nightingale v. Withington, 15	
Exch. 565		Mass. 272	31, 32, 37
	34, 49	Nixon v. Bullock, 9 Yerg.	414
Newsom v. Pryor, 7 Wheat.	7 633		981, 990
v. Thighen, 30 Miss.	414 405	v. Cobleigh, 52 Ill.	387
Newsome v. Graham, 10 B. & C.			202, 803, 810
234	752	v. Halley, 78 Ill.	611 78
Newton v. Bealer, 41 Iowa,	334 677	Noble v. Adams, 7 Taunt.	59 258
v. Forster, 12 M. & W.		v. Discount Co., 5 H. & N.	
772	1010	225	728
v. Galbraith, 5 Johns.		v. Googins, 99 Mass.	231
119	871, 987		190, 902
v. Marsden, 2 J. & H.		v. Kelly, 40 N. Y.	415 1037
356	397	v. Noble, 26 Ark.	317 289
Niagara Bank v. Rosevelt, 9 Cow.		v. Nugent, 89 Ill.	522 943
409	931	v. Oil Co., 79 Penn. St.	354 842
Niagara Ins. Co. v. De Graff, 12		v. Smith, 2 Johns.	52 496
Mich. 124	652	v. Walker, 32 Ala.	456 469
Niblo v. Binsse, 3 Abb. N. Y.		v. Ward, L. R. 2 Ex.	135 661
App. 375 ; 1 Keyes,	476 326	Nobles v. Bates, 7 Cow.	307 430, 433
Nichol v. Alexander, 28 Wis.	118 899	Noe v. Christie, 51 N. Y.	270 999
v. Godts, 10 Exch.	191	v. Hodges, 3 Humph.	162 985
	187, 225, 914		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Noel v. Horton, 50 Iowa, 687	242, 246	Northwestern R. R. v. M'Michael,	
Noetling v. Wright, 72 Ill. 390	260	5 Exch. 114	34, 40, 49, 58
Nofsinger v. Ring, 71 Mo. 149	593	Northwestern Univ. v. People, 99	
Nokes v. Kilmorey, 1 De G. & Sm.		U. S. 309	1063
444	887	Norton v. Coons, 3 Denio, 130	765, 766
Nolte v. Reichelm, 96 Ill. 425	279	v. Danvers, 7 T. R. 375	150
Noonan v. Ilsley, 21 Wis. 140	899	v. Ellam, 2 M. & W. 461	
v. Orton, 21 Mo. 283	887		575, 972, 980
Norman v. Phillips, 14 M. & W.		v. Herron, 1 C. & P. 648	134
277	792, 877	v. Marden, 15 Me. 45	
v. Thompson, 4 Ex. 755	527		198, 752, 753, 754
Norrington v. Wright, U. S. C. C.		v. Nichols, 35 Mich. 148	78
Pa. 1882; 21 Am. Law Reg. 395	580	v. Sewall, 106 Mass. 143	228
Norris's App., 71 Penn. St. 106	726	v. Tuttle, 60 Ill. 130	424
Norris v. Beazley, L. R. 2 C. P.		v. Webb, 36 Me. 270	620
D. 80	1016	v. Young, 3 Greenl. 30	
v. Douglass, 2 South. 817	837		285, 730
v. Tayloe, 49 Ill. 17	159	Norwich v. R. R., 4 E. & B. 397	
v. Tharp, 55 Ind. 47	1029		135, 462
v. U. S., 14 Ct. of Cl. 354	996	Norwich Yarn Co., in re, 22 Beav.	
v. Vance, 3 Rich (S. C.) 164		143	138
	57, 60	Norwood v. De Hart, 30 N. J. Eq.	
North v. Henneberry, 44 Wis. 306	698	412	785
v. Phillips, 89 Penn. St.		Nosotti v. Page, 10 C. B. 643	966
250	453	Nott v. Riccard, 22 Beav. 307	892
v. Wakefield, 13 Q. B. 536	831	Nottidge v. Prichard, 2 Cl. & F.	
North Am. Ins. Co. v. Throop, 22		379	946
Mich. 146	256	v. Prince, 2 Giff. 246	
v. Zaenger, 63			159, 161
Ill. 464	670	Nottingham Hide Co. v. Bottrill,	
North Am. Oil Co. v. Forsyth, 48		L. R. 8 C. P. 694	515
Penn. St. 291	282	Nourse v. Henshaw, 123 Mass. 96	77
North Bridgewater Bank v. Soule,		Novelli v. Rossi, 2 B. & Ad. 757	703
129 Mass. 528	1021	Nowlan v. Ablett, 2 C. M. & R.	
North British Ins. Co. v. London		54	718
Ins. Co., L. R. 5 Ch. D. 569		v. Cain, 3 Allen, 261	243
	320, 770	v. Griffin, 68 Me. 235	486
North Leb. R. R. v. McGrann, 33		Nowlin v. Pyne, 47 Iowa, 293	202
Penn. St. 530	594	v. Snow, 40 Mich. 699	
Northampton v. Elwell, 4 Gray,			245, 260
81	788	Noyes v. Loring, 55 Me. 408	277
Northampton Bank v. Balliet, 8		v. R. R., 30 Conn. 1	946
W. & S. 311	984, 1026	v. Spaulding, 27 Vt. 420	453
Northampton Ins. Co. v. Tuttle,		Nugent v. Smith, L. R. 1 C. P. D.	
40 N. J. L. 476	19	423	308, 309
Northcote v. Doughty, L. R. 4 C.		Nunan v. Bourquin, 7 Phila. 239	882
P. D. 385	73	Nunn v. Givhan, 45 Ala. 375	77
Northern Bank v. Johnson, 5		Nuttall v. Brannin, 5 Bush, 11	923
Coldw. 88	141	Nutting v. Dickinson, 8 Allen,	
Northington, ex parte, 37 Ala.		540	593
496; 1 Ala. Sel. Cas. 400	101, 106	Nye v. Alcohol Works, 51 Iowa,	
Northrop v. Bushnell, 38 Conn.		129	227
498	288		
v. Graves, 19 Conn. 548			
	198, 199, 754		
Northrup v. Ins. Co., 47 Mo. 435	274		
Northwestern Ins. Co. v. Neeves,			
46 Wis. 147	1067		
North-Western Iron Co. v. Meade,			
21 Wis. 474	4		

O.

Oakden v. Pike, 34 L. J. C. 620	887
Oakes v. Cushing, 24 Me. 313	513.
v. Turquand, L. R. 2, H. L.	
325 255, 283, 288, 291, 730	

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Oakley v. Morton, 1 Kern, 25	314	Olcott v. Supervisors, 16 Wall.	
Oaks v. Weller, 13 Vt. 106	570	678	367
Oates v. Hudson, 6 Exch. 346		Old Colony R. R. v. Evans, 6	
144, 149, 737		Gray, 25	135, 142
Oatfield v. Waring, 14 Johns. 188		Old Dom. St. Co. v. Burckhardt,	
7, 514, 708		31 Grat. 664	291
Oatman v. Walker, 33 Me. 67		Oldershaw v. King, 2 H. & N. 517	532
884, 895, 982		Olin v. Bate, 98 Ill. 53	408
O'Brien v. Gilchrist, 34 Me. 554	793	Olivari v. Menger, 39 Tex. 76	144
Ocean Beach Asso. v. Brinley, 34		Oliver v. Dix, 1 Dev. & Bat. Eq.	
N. J. Eq. 438	367	158	810a
Ocean Ins. Co. v. Carrington, 3		v. Fielden, 4 Ex. 135	659
Conn. 357	4	v. Houdlet, 13 Mass. 237	
O'Conley v. Natchez, 1 Sm. & M.		36, 55	
31	730	v. Ins. Co., 2 Curtis, C. C.	
O'Connell v. R., 11 Cl. & F. 155	367	277	199, 206
O'Connor v. Beckwith, 41 Mich.		v. McClellan, 21 Ala. 675	47
657	719	v. Woodroffe, 4 M. & W.	
Odell v. Buck, 21 Wend. 142	110	650	39
Odessa Co. v. Mendel, L. R. 8 Ch.		Ollivant v. Bayley, 5 Q. B. 288	
D. 235	338	194, 221, 223, 904	
Odineal v. Barry, 24 Miss. 9	405, 502	Olmstead v. Bailey, 35 Conn. 584	816
Odlin v. Greenleaf, 3 N. H. 270		v. Beale, 19 Pick. 528	
765, 835		714, 717, 718, 900	
O'Donnell v. Segar, 25 Mich. 367	239	v. Kellogg, 47 Iowa,	
v. Sweeney, 5 Ala. 467	382	460	1067
Oelrichs v. Ford, 21 Md. 489	202	O'Mealey v. Wilson, 1 Camp. 482	476
Offly v. Warde, 1 Lev. 235	788	Oneida Man. Co. v. Lawrence, 4	
Offord v. Davies, 12 C. B. N. S.		Cow. 440	213, 223, 224, 914, 915
748	14, 710	O'Neil v. McKewn, 1 S. C. 147	984
Ogden v. Cowley, 2 Johns. 274	1026	Ordinary v. Wherry, 1 Bailey, 28	63
v. Maxwell, 3 Blatch. 319	149	O'Rear v. Kiger, 10 Leigh, 622	406
v. Miller, 1 Bro. 147	338	Oregon St. N. Co. v. Winsor, 20	
v. Redd, 13 Bush, 581	512, 513	Wall. 64	433, 442
v. Saunders, 12 Wheat.		O'Reilly v. Kerns, 52 Penn. St.	
213	1067	214	594
Ogdensburg R. R. v. Vt. R. R., 6		Oriental Steam Co. v. Briggs, 4	
Thomp. & C. 488; 4 Hun, 268	141	De G. F. & J. 191	4
Ogilvie v. Currie, 37 L. J. C. 541		Orleans v. Platt, 99 U. S. 676	133
289, 290		Orme v. Galloway, 9 Ex. 544	504, 997
v. Ins. Co., 22 How. 380		Ormrod v. Huth, 14 M. & W. 651	
264, 288		214, 215, 230, 240	
v. Jeaffreson, 2 Giff. 353	185	Ormsby v. Fortune, 16 S. & R.	
v. Foljambe, 3 Mer. 53	661	302	958
O'Hara v. Carpenter, 23 Mich.		O'Rourke v. Bolingbroke, L. R. 2	
410	403	Ap. Ca. 814	160, 169
O'Hare v. Bank, 77 Penn. St. 96	365	Ortigosa v. Brown, 47 L. J. C.	
Ohio R. R. v. Middleton, 20 Ill.		168	687
629	202	Ortman v. Dixon, 13 Cal. 33	495
Oil Creek R. R. v. Penn. Trans.		Osbaldiston v. Simpson, 13 Sim.	
Co., 83 Penn. St. 160		513	454, 486
136, 139, 140		Osborn v. Farwell, 87 Ill. 89	651
O'Kell v. Elderton, Law T. Feb.		v. Jernegan, 126 Mass.	
11, 1882 (p. 254)	84	362	608
O'Keson v. Barclay, 2 Pen. & W.		v. Nicholson, 13 Wal. 654	361
531	533	v. Robbins, 36 N. Y. 365	
Okie v. Spencer, 2 Whart. 253	956	150, 151	
Okill v. Whittaker, 1 De G. & S.		Osborne v. Graham, 30 Ark. 66	161
83; 2 Phillips, 338	190, 194	v. Humphrey, 7 Conn.	
Olcott v. R. R., 27 N. Y. 546	138	335	1063

TABLE OF CASES.

[illegible]

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Paradine v. Jane, Aleyn, 26	318, 319	Parkhurst v. Smith, Willes, 327	662
Paramore v. Lindsey, 63 Mo.	63	Parkin v. Thorold, 16 Beav.	59
Parcell v. McComber, 11 Neb.	209		203, 888, 892
Parcher v. Marathon Co., 52 Wis.	388	Parkinson v. Lee, 2 East,	314
Parchman v. McKinney, 12 Sm.	& M. 631		220, 914
Pardee v. Fish, 60 N. Y.	265	Parks v. Hall, 2 Pick.	206
v. Platt, 20 Conn.	402	v. R. R., 23 Ind.	567
Pardoe v. Price, 16 M. & W.	451	v. Tel. Co., 13 Cal.	422
	726, 777	Parmelee v. Cameron, 41 N. Y.	392
Parfitt v. Jephson, 46 L. J. C. P.	529		165, 169
v. Lawless, L. R. 2 P. &	D. 462	v. Thompson, 45 N. Y.	58
Parham v. Randolph, 4 How.	(Miss.) 435		499, 710
Parham Sewing Machine Co. v.	Brock, 113 Mass.	Parmlee v. Adolph, 28 Oh. St.	10
	194	Parris v. Roberts, 12 Ired. L.	268
Paris, etc. R. R. v. Henderson,	89 Ill.	Parry v. Nicholson, 13 M. & W.	778
	86		695, 700
Paris Skating Rink Co., in re, L.	R. 5 Ch. D.	v. Roberts, 3 A. & E.	118
	959		724, 725
Parish v. Stone, 14 Pick.	198	Parshall's App., 65 Penn. St.	224
	511, 742, 748		161, 887, 888
Park v. Johnson, 4 Allen,	259	Parsons v. Crosby, 5 Esp.	199
	166, 516		818, 819
v. Tool Co., 4 Lans.	103	v. Hill, 8 Mo.	135
Parker v. Byrnes, 1 Lowell,	539		33, 38
v. Carter, 4 Munf.	273	v. Keys, 43 Tex.	557
v. Crane, 6 Wend.	647		64, 70
v. Davis, 12 Wall.	461	v. Sexton, 4 C. B.	899
v. Ellis, 2 Sandf.	223		591
v. Frith, 1 Sim. & St.	199 n.	v. Taylor, 12 Hun,	252
	889		453
v. Gossage, 2 C. M. & R.	617	v. Winslow, 6 Mass.	169
	638		397
v. Hartt, 32 N. J. Eq.	225,	v. Woodward, 22 N. J.	L. 196
	844		848
	1029, 1030	Partridge v. Badger, 25 Barb.	146
v. Ibbetson, 4 C. B. N. S.	346		138
	588	v. Hatch, 18 N. H.	494
v. Jacobs, 14 S. C.	112		899
v. James, 4 Camp.	112	v. Messer, 14 Gray,	180
v. Kendall, 3 Vt.	540		380
v. Lewis, L. R. 8 Ch.	1035	v. Osborne, 5 Russ.	195
	570 a		289
v. Moulton, 114 Mass.	99	Pasley v. Freeman, 3 T. R.	51
v. Nickerson, 112 Mass.	195		219, 237, 238, 250, 262
	161	Pass v. McRea, 36 Miss.	143
v. Pettit, 43 N. J. L.	512		845
v. Pitts, 73 Ind.	597	Passmore v. Eldridge, 12 S. & R.	198
v. R. R., 7 M. & G.	253		380
v. R. R., L. R. 1 C. P. D.	618	v. Tel. Co., 78 Penn.	St. 238
	22, 572		438
v. Thomas, 19 Ind.	213	Patchin v. Cromach, 13 Vt.	330
v. U. S., Peters C. C.	262		41
v. Urie, 21 Penn. St.	305	v. Lamborn, 31 Penn. St.	314
Parkhurst v. Dickerson, 21 Pick.	307		888
	837	v. Swift, 21 Vt.	292
			809
		Pate v. Wright, 30 Ind.	476
			388
		Patee v. Pelton, 48 Vt.	182
			230
		Patent File Co., in re, L. R. 6 Ch.	83
			135, 138
		Paterson v. Long, 5 Beav.	186
			784
		Patillo v. Smith, 61 Ga.	265
			507, 1008, 1012
		Patrick v. Grant, 14 Me.	233
			662
		v. Littell, 36 Oh. St.	79
			77, 446
		v. Milner, L. R. 2 C. P.	D. 342
			887, 888
		v. Putnam, 27 Vt.	759
			323
		Pattee v. Greely, 13 Met.	284
			363, 382
		Patten v. Casey, 57 Mo.	118
			377
		v. Fullerton, 27 Me.	58
			944

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Patten v. Moses, 49 Me. 255	138	Pearce v. Watts, L. R. 20 Eq. 492	3
Patterson v. Clark, 126 Mass. 531	452	Pearl v. Deacon, 1 De G. & J. 461	831
v. Cunningham, 12 Me. 506	624	v. Harris, 121 Mass. 390	417
v. Donner, 48 Cal. 369	415, 500	Pearle v. Edwards, 1 Leon. 102	514
v. Judd, 27 Mo. 563	902	v. Unger, Cro. Eliz. 94	515
v. Kirkland, 34 Miss. 423	249	Pearsall v. Summersett, 4 Taunt. 593	555, 664
v. Lawrence, 90 Ill. 174	78, 89	Pearsoll v. Chapin, 44 Penn. St. 9	36, 283, 235, 736, 919
v. Luckley, L. R. 10 Ex. 330	699, 702, 719	Pearson v. Darrington, 32 Ala. 227	92
v. McNeeley, 16 Oh. St. 348	700	v. Lord, 6 Mass. 81	197
Pattison v. Hall, 9 Cow. 747	924, 928, 929, 934	v. Morgan, 2 Bro. Ch. 388	241
Patton v. Campbell, 70 Ill. 72	249, 258, 262	v. Parker, 3 N. H. 366	758, 768, 815, 816
v. Nicholson, 3 Wheat. 204	94, 475	r. Pearson, 7 Johns. 26	531
Paul v. Dod, 2 C. B. 800	955	r. Skelton, 1 M. & W. 504	766, 771
Paulin v. Howser, 63 Ill. 312	533	v. Thomason, 15 Ala. 700	504, 997
Paulison v. Van Iderstein, 28 N. J. Eq. 306	196	Pease v. Gloahec, L. R. 1 P. C. 219	291, 793
Pawle's case, L. R. 4 Ch. 497	287	v. Hirst, 10 B. & C. 122	814
Pawle v. Gunn, 4 Bing. N. C. 445	336, 756, 757	v. Pease, 35 Conn. 131	134
Pawlet v. Clark, 9 Cranch, 292	1066	v. Sabin, 38 Vt. 432	904, 905
Paxton v. Popham, 9 East, 408	144	v. Smith, 61 N. Y. 477	736
Payler v. Homersham, 4 M. & S. 423	1037	Peaslee v. Breed, 10 N. H. 489	765
Payne v. Bank, 6 Sm. & M. 24	133	Peate v. Dicken, 1 C. M. & R. 422	382
v. Brecon, 3 H. & N. 572	338	Pechell v. Watson, 8 M. & W. 691	421
v. Cave, 3 T. R. 148	6, 25 b, 787	Peck v. Arehart, 95 Ill. 113	208
v. Rodden, 4 Bibb, 304	230, 231	v. Brewer, 48 Ill. 54	290
v. Smith, 20 Ga. 654	259	v. Briggs, 3 Denio, 107	343, 422
v. Whale, 7 East, 274	742	v. Burr, 10 N. Y. 294	360
v. Wilson, 7 B. & C. 423	654	v. Ellis, 2 Johns. Ch. 131	771
Paynter v. Williams, 1 C. & M. 810	7, 708	v. Harriott, 6 S. & R. 146	945
Payson v. Whitcomb, 15 Pick. 212	723	v. Hubbard, 11 Vt. 612	872
Peabody v. Brown, 10 Gray, 45	202	v. Ledwidge, 25 Ill. 109	311
v. Flint, 6 Allen, 52	127, 139	v. Mayo, 14 Vt. 33	462
v. Norfolk, 98 Mass. 452	436	v. Ritchey, 66 Mo. 114	269
Peacock v. Evans, 16 Ves. 512	165	v. U. S., 102 U. S. 64	603, 689
v. Harris, 10 East, 104	779	Peckham v. North Parish, 16 Pick. 274	825
v. Monk, 1 Ves. Sen. 127	540, 683	Pedrick v. Porter, 5 Allen, 324	257
v. Penson, 11 Beav. 355	257	Peebles v. Rand, 43 N. H. 337	834
v. Pursell, 14 C. B. N. S. 728	954, 958	Peek v. Gurney, L. R. 6 H. L. 377	236, 237, 249, 250, 255, 276
Peake v. Conlan, 43 Iowa, 297	382	Peel, in re, L. R. 2 P. & D. 46	658
v. La Baw, 21 N. J. Eq. 269	77	Peeters v. Opie, 2 Wms. Saund. 346, 350	582, 605
v. Lemon, 1 Lans. 295	83	Pegge v. Lampeter Union, L. R. 9 C. P. 373	7, 708
Pearce v. Blackwell, 12 Ired. 49	249	Peik v. R. R., 6 Biss. 177; 94 U. S. 164	1064
v. Brooks, L. R. 1 Ex. 213	341, 342, 343, 374	Peirce v. Building Co., 9 La. 397	533
v. R. R., 21 How. 441	137	v. Ruley, 5 Ind. 69	528
		Pellatt's case, L. R. 2 Ch. 527	17
		Pellecat v. Angell, 2 C. M. & R. 311	343, 360, 446
		Pellow v. Wonford, 9 B. & C. 134	895

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION
Pemberton v. Vaughan, 10 Q. B. 87	432
v. Williams, 87 Ill. 15	149, 737
Pemberton Bank v. Porter, 125 Mass. 333	142
Pembroke Iron Co. v. Parsons, 5 Gray, 589	662, 902
Pence v. Langdon, 99 U. S. 578	282, 284, 285, 287, 289, 919
Pendarvis v. Gray, 41 Tex. 326	282
Pendlebury v. Walker, 4 Y. & C. 424	766
Pendleton v. Amy, 13 Wall. 297	141
Penn v. Whitehead, 17 Grat. 503	77
Penniman, in re, 11 R. I. 333; 103 U. S. 714	1067
Pennington v. Gittings, 2 Gill & J. 208	494, 512
Pennock's App., 14 Penn. St. 446	267
Penn. Coal Co. v. Blake, 85 N. Y. 227	576
Penn. Co. v. Wentz, 37 Oh. St. 333	438
Penn. R. R. v. Books, 57 Penn. St. 339	271
v. Plank Road, 71 Penn. St. 350	269, 275
Penny v. Corwithe, 18 Johns. 499	698
v. Porter, 2 East, 2	620
Penrose v. Curren, 3 Rawle, 351	52, 53
Pensacola Tel. Co. v. West. Un. Co. 96 U. S. 1	437
Pentz v. Stanton, 10 Wend. 271	810 a
People v. Albany, 11 Wend. 539	365
v. Art Union, 7 N. Y. 240	458
v. Baker, 20 Wend. 602	953
v. Bartlett, 3 Hill, 570	321, 329
v. Brown, 5 Wend. 590	135
v. Buckland, 13 Wend. 592	483
v. Clark, 1 Cal. 406	885
v. Cook, 30 How. Pr. 110	321
v. Crissie, 4 Denio, 525	259, 260, 261
v. Dulaney, 96 Ill. 503	652
v. Fisher, 14 Wend. 9	439, 442
v. Gates, 43 N. Y. 40	42
v. Haynes, 14 Wend. 546	213, 242 a
v. Ins. Co., 78 N. Y. 114	551
v. Johnson, 12 Johns. 292	277
v. Johnson, 14 Ill. 342	494
v. Kendall, 25 Wend. 399	52, 262
v. Knapp, 26 Mich. 112	346
v. Manhattan Co., 9 Wend. 351	1063
v. Manning, 8 Cow. 297	321

	SECTION
People v. Mauran, 5 Denio, 389	128
v. Mercein, 8 Paige, 47; 25 Wend. 64; 3 Hill, 399	395, 400
v. Miller, 2 Park. C. R. 197	242
v. Morris, 13 Wend. 325	1066
v. New York, 5 Cow. 331	934
v. Otis, 24 Hun, 519	1067
v. Richards, 1 Mich. 216	376
v. San Francisco, 27 Cal. 655	264
v. Sergeant, 8 Cow. 139	452
v. Sisson, 98 Ill. 335	520
v. Soto, 49 Cal. 69	640
v. Stephens, 71 N. Y. 527	288, 443, 752
v. Tubbs, 37 N. Y. 586	321
v. Turnpike Co., 23 Wend. 193	136
People's Bank's App., 93 Penn. St. 107	217
People's Bank v. Kurtz, 11 Weekly Notes, 225	230
Peoples v. Buckland, 13 Wend. 592	484
Peoria, etc. R. R. v. Coal Co., 68 Ill. 489	442 a
Pequawket Bridge v. Mathes, 8 N. H. 139	696
Percival v. Harger, 40 Iowa, 286	242
Perine v. Dunn, 3 Johns. Ch. 508	421
Perit v. Pittfield, 5 Rawle, 166	955
Perkins v. Bailey, 99 Mass. 61	282, 730
v. Clay, 54 N. H. 518	430, 432, 433
v. Cummings, 2 Gray, 258	339
v. Douglass, 20 Me. 317	590
v. Eaton, 3 N. H. 152	452, 729
v. Elliott, 8 C. E. Greene, 526	77
v. Gay, 3 S. & R. 327	532
v. Grant, 2 La. An. 328	944
v. Hart, 11 Wheat. 237	774, 778
v. Ins. Co., 4 Cow. 645	128
v. Lockwood, 100 Mass. 249	996, 1006
v. Lyman, 9 Mass. 522	431, 433
v. Partridge, 30 N. J. Eq. 82	282
v. Rogers, 35 Ind. 124	473, 478
v. Savage, 15 Wend. 412	340, 344
v. Watson, 58 Tenn. 173	142

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Perkins v. Whelan, 116 Mass.		Phelan v. Gardner, 43 Cal.	306 118
542	231	Phelps v. Decker, 10 Mass.	267 352
Perley v. Balch, 23 Pick.	283 285, 919	v. Hubbard, 51 Vt.	489 871
Perre v. Castro, 14 Cal.	519 972	v. Johnson, 8 Johns.	54 1033
Perrin v. Ins. Co., 11 Ohio,	147 664	v. Kent, 4 Day,	96 463
v. Wilson, 10 Mo.	451 70	v. Lyle, 10 A. & E.	113 819
Perrine v. Cheeseman, 6 Halst.		v. Quinn, 1 Bush,	375 245
174	684	v. Wait, 30 N. Y.	78 237
v. Cooley, 10 Vroom,	449 938	v. Worcester, 11 N. H.	51 69, 71
Perring v. Hone, 4 Bing.	28; 12	v. Zuschlag, 34 Tex.	371 150
Moore, 135; 2 C. & P.	401 700	Philadelphia v. Lockhardt,	73
Perrins v. Ins. Co., 2 E. & E.	317 256	Penn. St.	211 848
Perrott v. Perrott, 14 East,	423 198	Philadelphia Loan Co. v. Towner,	
Perry v. Lord, 111 Mass.	504 708	13 Conn.	249 129, 142
v. Smith, 22 Vt.	301 599	Phila., etc. R. R. v. Johnson,	7 W.
v. Swasey, 12 Cush.	36 786	& S.	317 494
Persch v. Quiggle, 57 Penn. St.		v. Lewis, 33 Penn.	
247	161	St.	33 469
Persse, in re, 3 Molloy,	94 106	r. Stichter,	11
Petch v. Lyon, 9 Q. B.	147 778	Weekly Notes,	
Peter v. Beverly, 10 Pet.	532 954, 956	325	138
v. Steel, 3 Yeates,	250 708	Philadelphia Steamboat Co. v.	
v. Wright, 6 Ind.	183 264	Atkins, 22 Penn. St.	522 792
Peters v. Anderson, 5 Taunt.	596	Philbrook v. Belknap, 6 Vt.	383
	923, 927, 929		717, 900
v. Ballistier, 3 Pick.	495 838	v. Ins. Co., 37 Me.	137 635
v. Davis, 7 Mass.	257 820	Phillip v. Kirkpatrick, Add. (Penn.)	
v. Fleming, 6 M. & W.	42	124	467
	68, 69, 70	Philips v. Gratz, 2 Pen. & W.	412 382
v. Florence, 38 Penn. St.		v. Hatch, 1 Dill.	571 473
194	181	v. Morrison, 3 Bibb,	105 882
v. Hilles, 48 Md.	506 258	Phillip v. Gallant, 62 N. Y.	256 198
v. Lord, 18 Conn.	337 42, 730	Phillips v. Barnet, L. R.	1 Q. B.
v. Mortimer, 4 Edw. Ch.		D.	436 80
279	469	v. Bistolli, 2 B. & C.	511
Peterson v. Edmonson, 5 Harring.			186, 877
378	311	v. Bonsall, 2 Binn.	138 816
Peto v. Blades, 5 Taunt.	657 755	v. Bullard, 58 Ga.	256 953
Petre v. Espinasse, 2 My. & K.		v. Car Co., 82 Penn. St.	
496	377	368	554
Petrie v. Bury, 3 B. & C.	353 814	v. Clagett, 11 M. & W.	84
v. Hannay, 3 T. R.	418 354		821, 1035
Pettee v. Peppard, 120 Mass.	522	v. Clift, 4 H. & N.	168 613
	784, 786	v. Foxall, L. R.	7 Q. B.
Pettigrew v. Chellis, 41 N. H.	95 249	666	570 a, 710
Pettis v. Ray, 12 R. I.	344 999, 1003	v. Graves, 20 Oh. St.	371 77
Pettit v. Pettit, 32 Ala.	288 509	v. Green, 3 A. K. Marsh.	7 56
v. Shepard, 32 N. Y.	97 633	v. Homfray, L. R.	6 Ch.
Petty v. Cooke, L. R.	6 Q. B. 790 949	770	253, 731
v. Board, 70 Ind.	290 528	v. Innes, 4 Cl. & F.	234 388
v. Petty, 4 B. Mon.	215 399	v. Ives, 1 Rawle,	36 452, 729
Pfeiffer v. Adler, 37 N. Y.	164 519	v. Jones, 1 A. & E.	333 708
v. Maltby, 38 Tex.	523 349	v. Medbury, 7 Conn.	568 397
Pfeuffer v. Maltby, 54 Tex.	454	v. Meyers, 82 Ill.	67 91
	352, 473	v. Moor, 71 Me.	78 317
Pfirshing v. Falsh, 87 Ill.	260 77	v. Moore, 100 U. S.	208 93
Phalan v. Stiles, 11 Vt.	82 858	v. Moses, 65 Me.	70 930
Phalen v. Clark, 19 Conn.	421	v. Mullinga, L. R.	7 Ch.
	353, 357	244	164
v. Virginia, 8 How.	163 1064	v. Overton, 4 Hayw.	291 427

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Phillips v. Preston, 5 How. U. S.		Pierce v. Burnham, 4 Met. (Mass.)	
278	523	303	80
v. Scott, 43 Mo. 86	962	v. Conant, 25 Me. 33	737
v. Soule, 9 Gray, 233	581	v. Emery, 32 N. H. 484	138
v. Stevens, 16 Mass. 238	318	v. Evans, 61 Penn. St. 415	362
v. Warren, 14 M. & W.		v. Fuller, 8 Mass. 223	433, 434
379	952	v. Hoffman, 24 Vt. 525	239, 377
Phillips, etc. Construction Co. v.		v. Jarnagin, 57 Miss. 107	285
Seymour, 91 U. S. 646	580	v. Kibbee, 51 Vt. 559	483
Phillipson v. Hayter, L. R. 6 C. P.		v. Knight, 31 Vt. 701	923, 927
38	84	v. Parker, 4 Metc. (Mass.)	
Phillpotts v. Clifton, 10 W. R. Ex.		80	1034
135	979, 986	v. Parker, 121 Mass. 403	708
Philomath College v. Hartless, 6		v. Pierce, 9 Hun, 50; 71	
Oreg. 158	528	N. Y. 154	92, 399
Philpott v. Jones, 2 A. & E. 41	930	v. State, 13 N. H. 536	631
Phippen v. Stickney, 3 Metc. 384		v. Wilson, 34 Ala. 596	
	267, 443		282, 288, 730
Phipps v. Ackers, 9 Cl. & F. 583	367	v. Woodward, 6 Pick. 206	433
v. Buckman, 30 Penn. St.		Pieroy, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 9 Ch. 33	
401	216, 242, 243, 749		507, 799
v. Jones, 20 Penn. St. 260	528	v. Fynney, L. R. 12 Eq.	
v. Lovegrove, L. R. 16 Eq.		69	821, 946, 950, 1028
80	842	Pierson v. Dunlop, Cowp. 571	599
Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Lawrence, 4		v. Heisey, 19 Iowa, 114	35
Metc. (Ky.) 9	338 a	v. Hooker, 3 Johns. 68	
Piatt v. Longworth, 27 Oh. St.			821, 946
159	378	Pigot's case, 11 Coke, 26 b	696, 702
Picard v. Hine, L. R. 5 Ch. 274	77	Pigott v. Thompson, 3 B. & P. 147	
v. McCormick, 11 Mich. 68			784, 799
	259, 260	Pike v. Brown, 7 Cush. 133	786 a, 865
Pickard v. Sears, 6 A. & E. 469		v. Fay, 101 Mass. 134	
	6, 249		214, 245, 257, 260
Pickens v. Hathaway, 100 Mass.		v. Fitzgibbon, L. R. 14 Ch.	
247	840	D. 837; 17 Ch. D. 454	77, 78
Pickering v. Cease, 79 Ill. 328		v. King, 16 Iowa, 49	382
	453, 453 a	v. Munroe, 36 Me. 309	670
v. De Rochemont, 45		Pilcher v. Smith, 2 Head, 208	285
N. H. 67	816	Pilkington v. Green, 2 B. & P.	
v. Marsh, 7 N. H. 192	765	151	405
v. Pickering, 2 Beav.		v. Scott, 15 M. & W.	
31	198	657	434, 437
v. Pickering, 6 N. H.		Pilling v. Armitage, 12 Ves. 78	254
120	84	Pillow v. Roberts, 13 How. 472	680
v. R. R., L. R. 3 C. P.		Pillsbury v. Mitchell, 5 Wis. 17	899
235	338, 842	Pilmer v. Bank, 16 Iowa, 321	658
Pickett v. Bank, 32 Ark. 346	924	Pilmore v. Hood, 5 Bing. N. C.	
v. Barron, 29 Barb. 505	733	97	237, 260
v. School Dist., 25 Wis.		Pimm v. Lewis, 2 F. & F. 778	250, 256
551	403	Pince v. Beattie, 32 L. J. C. 734	427
v. Sutter, 5 Cal. 412	118	Pinckston v. Brown, 3 Jones Eq.	
Pickin v. Graham, 1 C. & M. 725	513	494	353
Pickler v. State, 18 Ind. 266	39	Pindall v. Bank, 7 Leigh, 617; 10	
Pickrel v. Rose, 87 Ill. 263	6	Leigh, 481	744, 923
Picot v. Sanderson, 1 Dev. 309	496	Pindar v. Upton, 44 N. H. 358	312
Pidcock v. Bishop, 3 B. & C. 605		Pingry v. Washburn, 1 Aik. 264	402
	249, 253	Pinkett v. Wright, 2 Hare, 120	842
Piddington v. R. R., 27 L. J. C.		Pinkham v. Gear, 3 N. H. 163	198, 264
P. 295	149	Pinnel's case, 5 Coke, 117 a	
Pidgeon v. Burslem, 3 Exch. 465	458		504, 935, 997

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Pinney v. Andrus, 41 Vt. 631	224	Plumer v. Smith, 5 N. H. 553	486
v. Gleasson, 5 Wend. 393 ;		Plummer v. People, 16 Ill. 358	150
5 Cow. 152	599	Poe v. Duck, 5 Md. F	843
Pinnix v. McAdoo, 68 N. C. 56	269	Poillon v. Martin, 1 Sandf. Ch.	
Pippen v. Wesson, 74 N. C. 437	77	569	161
Piqua Bank v. Knoop, 16 How.		Poland v. Brownell, 131 Mass. 138	
369	1063	232 a, 245	
Piscataqua Bridge v. N. H.		Pole v. Harrobin, 9 East, 416	146
Bridge, 7 N. H. 35	1063	Polglass v. Oliver, 2 C. & J. 15	
Pistor v. Cator, 9 M. & W. 315	582	983, 985	
Pitcher v. Hennessy, 48 N. Y.		Polhemus v. Heiman, 45 Cal. 573	219
415	198, 199	Polhill v. Walter, 3 B. & Ad. 114	
v. Livingston, 4 Johns.		214, 236	
1	899	Police Jury v. Britton, 15 Wal.	
Pitkin v. Noyes, 48 N. H. 294		566	138
532, 533, 535		Pollard v. Clayton, 1 K. & J. 462	890
Pitt v. Gentle, 49 Mo. 74	505, 528	v. Collier, 8 Ohio, 43	824
v. Purssord, 8 M. & W. 538		v. Rowland, 2 Blackf. 22	180
759, 761, 765, 835		v. Shaffer, 1 Dall. 210	319
v. Smith, 3 Camp. 33	119, 121	Pollen v. Le Roy, 30 N. Y. 549	630
Pittenger v. Pittenger, 3 N. J. Eq.		Pollock v. Stables, 12 Q. B. 765	757
156	118, 119	v. Sullivan, 53 Vt. 507	
Pittsburg R. R. v. Barrett, 36		217, 248	
Ohio St. 448	438	Pond v. Cooke, 45 Conn. 126	842, 843
v. Schaeffer,		v. Williams, 1 Gray, 630	
59 Penn. St.		831, 930	
350	570 a	v. Wyman, 15 Mo. 175	716
Pittsburg Turnpike Co. v. Com.,		Ponder v. Carter, 12 Ired. L. 242	765
2 Watts, 433	919	Pontifex v. Wilkinson, 1 C. B. 75	602
Pixley v. Boynton, 79 Ill. 351		Pool v. Boston, 5 Cush. 219	413
453, 453 a		v. Pratt, 1 Chipm. 252	73
Place v. Minster, 65 N. Y. 89	251, 282	Poole's Estate, L. R. 6 C. D. 739	77
Plaisted v. Palmer, 63 Me. 576	382	Poole v. Hill, 6 M. & W. 835	816
Planché v. Colburn, 8 Bing. 14		v. McLeod, 1 Sm. & M. 391	832
312, 605, 712, 716		v. Shergold, 1 Cox, 273	186
v. Fletcher, Doug. 251	445	v. Tunbridge, 2 M. & W.	
Plant Seed Co. v. Hall, 14 Kan.		223	575, 869, 873, 980
553	4	Poor v. Hazleton, 15 N. H. 564	169
Planters' Bk. v. Sharp, 6 How.		v. Woodburn, 25 Vt. 234	
301	1063, 1067	282, 285	
v. Union Bk., 16		Poorman v. Goswiler, 2 Watts,	
Wall. 483	343, 354,	69	1022
357, 453, 473, 725		Pope v. Bank, 57 N. Y. 126	130
Planters' Co. v. Johnson, 62 Ga. 308	131	v. Linn, 50 Me. 83	382, 389
Plaskett's Estate, in re, 30 L. J.		v. Tunstall, 3 Pike, 209	
C. 606	525	999, 1003	
Plath v. Ins. Co., 23 Minn. 479	338 a	Popham v. Brooke, 5 Russ. 8	161
Player v. Archer, 2 Sid. 120	416	Poplett v. Stockdale, Ry. & M.	
Playford v. Tel. Co., L. R. 4 Q.		337	370, 372
B. 706	791	Pordage v. Cole, 1 Wms. Saund.	
Pledge v. Buss, Johns. Ch. 663	831	319	558, 580
Plevins v. Downing, L. R. 1 C.		Portarlington v. Soulby, 3 My. &	
P. D. 220	661, 870, 1003	K. 104	454
Plimley v. Westley, 2 Bing. N.		Port Carbon Iron Co. v. Groves,	
C. 249	956	68 Penn. St. 149	221, 904
Plitt, ex parte, 2 Wall. Jr. 453	427	Porter v. Blood, 5 Pick. 54	882
Plomer v. Long, 1 Stark. 122	926	v. Briggs, 38 Iowa, 166	92
Ploss v. Thomas, 6 Mo. Ap. 157	537	v. Bright, 82 Penn. St. 441	744
Plowman v. Riddle, 7 Ala. 775		v. Bullard, 26 Me. 448	839
619, 620, 621, 622, 623		v. Jones, 52 Mo. 399	415

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Porter v. Parmly, 39 N. Y. Sup. Ct. 219	427	Power v. Alston, 93 Ill. 587	377
v. Stewart, 2 Aiken, 417	604	v. Barham, 7 C. & P. 356;	
v. Taylor, 6 M. & S. 156	946	6 N & M. 62; 4 Ad. &	
v. Viets, 1 Biss. 177	453	El. 473	220, 259
Portis v. Green, 25 Ark. 376	474	v. Butcher, 10 B. & C. 329	
Portland Bank v. Brown, 22 Me. 295	931, 932	756, 758, 939	
Portsmouth v. Portsmouth, 1 Hag. Ec. R. 355	113	v. Whitmore, 4 M. & S. 141	637
Postmaster-General v. Furber, 4 Mason, 333	933	Powers v. Briggs, 79 Ill. 493	810 a
v. Norvell,		v. Bumeratz, 12 Oh. St. 273	570
Gilpin, 106	926	v. Chaplain, 30 N. J. Eq. 17	469
Poston v. Balch, 69 Mo. 115		v. Freeman, 2 Lans. 127	533
159, 235, 317,	353	v. Mayo, 97 Mass. 180	166
Pott v. Clegg, 16 M. & W. 321	980	v. Nash, 37 Me. 322	765, 768
Potter v. Carpenter, 76 N. Y. 157		v. Russell, 26 Mich. 179	84
1, 719		v. Skinner, 34 Vt. 274	402
v. Duffield, L. R. 18 Eq. 4	804	v. Spear, 3 N. H. 35	833
v. Everitt, 7 Ired. Eq. 152	683	v. Wilson, 47 Iowa, 666	717
v. Ins. Co., 5 Hill, 147	657	Pownal v. Ferrand, 6 B. & C. 439	
v. Lansing, 1 Johns. 215	292	759, 768	
v. McCoy, 26 Penn. St. 458		Prairie Farmer Co. v. Taylor, 69 Ill. 440	589
833, 860		Prater v. Miller, 25 Ala. 320	535
v. Rankin, L. R. 5 C. P. 341	569	Pratt v. Barker, 1 Sim. 1; 4 Russ. 507	161
v. Tallman, 35 Barb. 182	463	v. Campbell, 24 Penn. St. 184	653
v. Titcomb, 22 Me. 300		v. Farrar, 10 Allen, 519	284
285, 290, 919		v. Philbrook, 41 Me. 132	288
Pottinger v. Hecksher, 2 Grant, 309	258	v. Russell, 7 Cush. 462	513
Potts v. Bell, 8 T. R. 548	473	v. Trustees, 93 Ill. 475	12, 528
v. Plaisted, 30 Mich. 149	972	v. Vizard, 5 B. & Ad. 808	
v. Whitehead, 5 C. E. Green, 55; 8 C. E. Green, 512		730, 737	
4, 9, 15, 18		Pray v. Burbank, 10 N. H. 377	365
Poussard v. Spiers, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 410	323, 329, 558, 608	Prentice v. Achorn, 2 Paige, 30	
Powel v. Little, 1 W. Bl. 8	944	119, 121	
Powell v. Bradlee, 9 Gill & J. 220	258	v. Brimhall, 123 Mass. 291	786 a
v. Brown, 3 Johns. 100	505	Prentiss v. Russ, 16 Me. 30	217
v. Cobb, 3 Jones Eq. 456	159	Presby v. Parker, 56 N. H. 409	270
v. Divett, 15 East, 29	695, 696	Presbyterian Church v. New York, 5 Cow. 538	305, 321
v. Duff, 3 Camp. 181	687	Prescott v. Battersby, 119 Mass. 285	360, 365
v. Graham, 7 Taunt. 580	727	v. Hubbell, 1 McC. 94	954
v. Horton, 2 Bing. N. C. 668	915	v. Locke, 51 N. H. 94	714, 877
v. Inman, 8 Jones, N. C. 436	376	v. Morris, 32 N. H. 101	
v. Layton, 2 B. & P. N. R. 365	731	52, 53, 339, 343, 353, 509	
v. Newburgh, 19 Johns. 284	709	Prestman v. Silljacks, Ct. of App. Md. 1882; 14 Rep. 331	887, 888
v. Rees, 7 A. & E. 426	731	Preston v. Boston, 12 Pick. 7	149, 738
v. Smith, L. R. 14 Eq. 85	198	v. Finney, 2 W. & S. 53	869
v. Smith, 8 Johns. 249	768	Prestwick v. Marshall, 7 Bing. 565	84
v. Smith, 66 N. C. 401	343	Pretlow v. Bailey, 29 Grat. 212	1062
v. Waters, 8 Cow. 669	467	Prewitt v. Wilson, 103 U. S. 22	537
Power's App., 63 Penn. St. 443	169	Price's App., 54 Penn. St. 472	168
		Price v. Berrington, 7 Hare, 394; 3 Mac. & G. 486	111

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Price v. Dowdy, 34 Ark. 285	933	Proprietors of Locks and Canals	
v. Dyer, 17 Ves. 356	655, 661	v. R. R., 104 Mass. 1	137
v. Easton, 4 B. & Ad. 433 ;		Prosser v. Edmonds, 1 Y. & C.	424
1 N. & M. 303	506, 784	481	
v. Furman, 27 Vt. 268		Protection Ins. Co. v. Davis, 5 Al-	570
	47, 48, 48 a	len, 54	
v. Green, 16 M. & W. 346		Proudfoot v. Montefiore, L. R. 2 Q.	253
	338, 433	B. 511	60
v. Hewett, 8 Exch. 146	52, 53	Prout v. Wiley, 28 Mich. 164	461
v. Ins. Co., 17 Minn. 497	256	Prov. Bank v. Frost, 14 Blatch.	
v. Jenkins, L. R. 5 C. D.		233	
619	537	Pruden v. Williams, 11 C. E.	785
v. Kirkham, 3 H. & C. 437	570 a	Green, 210	309
v. Minot, 107 Mass. 49	453	Pruitt v. R. R., 62 Mo. 527	
v. Moulton, 10 C. B. 561	776	Puckford v. Maxwell, 6 T. R. 52	953, 956
v. Neal, 3 Burr. 1354	250		895
v. Nixon, 5 Taunt. 338	620	Pugh v. Leeds, 2 Cowp. 714	817
v. North, 2 Y. & C. 620	190	v. Stringfield, 3 C. B. N. S. 2	532
v. Powell, 3 Comst. 322	792	Pullin v. Stokes, 2 H. Bl. 312	
v. Price, 16 M. & W. 241		Pulsford v. Richards, 17 Beav. 87	214, 241, 282
	853, 958, 959	Pulvertoft v. Pulvertoft, 18 Ves.	497
v. R. R., 16 M. & W. 244	674	84	242
v. Sanders, 60 Ind. 310	66, 72	Purdy v. Bullard, 41 Cal. 444	
v. Summers, 2 South. 578	486	Pursel v. Ellis, 5 W. & S. 525	758, 768
Prickett v. Badger, 1 C. B. N. S.			58
296	713	Pursley v. Hays, 17 Iowa, 310	230
Priddy v. Rose, 3 Mer. 86	412	Purvis v. Rayer, 9 Price, 488	607
Pride v. Bubbs, L. R. 7 Ch. 64	77	Pust v. Dowie, 5 B. & S. 20	91
Prideaux v. Bunnett, 1 C. B. N.		Putnam v. Bicknell, 18 Wis. 333	668
S. 613	194	v. Bond, 100 Mass. 58	954
v. Criddle, L. R. 4 Q. B.		v. Lewis, 8 Johns. 389	
455	953	v. Mellen, 34 N. H. 71	557, 558
Priest v. Cone, 51 Vt. 495	77		785
Priestly v. Fernie, 3 H. & C.		Putney v. Farnham, 27 Wis. 187	433
977	811	Pyke v. Thomas, 4 Bibb, 486	39
Prince of Wales Co. v. Harding,		Pyle v. Cravens, 4 Litt. (Ky.) 17	
K. B. & E. 183	135		
Pring v. Clarkson, 1 B. & C. 14	954		
Pringle v. Dunkley, 14 Sm. & M.			
16	397		
Printing Registering Co. v. Samp-			
son, L. R. 19 Eq. 462	370, 436		
Printup v. Fort, 40 Ga. 276	246		
Prioleau v. Bank, 16 Ga. 582	836		
Prior v. Hembrow, 8 M. & W. 873			
	757, 766, 832		
Pritchard's case, L. R. 8 Ch. 956	808		
Pritchard v. Ins. Co., 3 C. B. N.			
S. 622	298		
v. Ovey, 1 J. & W. 396	3		
Pritchett v. Ins. Co., 3 Yeates, 458			
	452, 455		
Proctor v. M'Call, 2 Bailey, 298	237		
v. Mather, 3 B. Mon. 353	956		
v. Sargent, 2 M. & G. 20			
	432, 433		
v. Sears, 4 Allen, 95	56, 62		
Prole v. Soady, 2 Giff. 1	216		
Proof v. Hines, For. 111	159		

TABLE OF CASES.

R.	SECTION	R.	SECTION
R. v. Aspinall, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 730	376	R. v. Pitts, Carr. & M. 284	453 b
v. Barnard, 7 C. & P. 784	248	v. Reed, L. R. 5 Q. B. D. 483	135, 137, 674
v. Brotherton, 2 Stra. 702	382	v. Ridgway, 3 F. & F. 838	261, 263
v. Bull, 13 Cox C. C. 608	248, 262	v. Robinson, 1 Leach, 44	376
v. Burnsides, Bell C. C. 282; 8 Cox, 370	240	v. Rowlands, 5 Cox C. C. 436; 17 Q. B. 671	439
v. Byrne, 10 Cox C. C. 369	240	v. St. Paul's Covent Garden, 7 Q. B. 232	680
v. Charretie, 13 Q. B. 447	407	v. Schlesinger, 10 Q. B. 670	241
v. Chawton, 1 Q. B. 247	896	v. Sherwood, D. & B. 251	263
v. Cleworth, 4 B. & S. 927	382	v. Simmonds, 4 Cox C. C. 277	264
v. Cooper, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 510	248, 262	v. Skipworth, 12 Cox C. C. 371	422
v. Dale, 7 C. & P. 352	242	v. Southerton, 6 East, 126	148
v. Davis, 11 Cox C. C. 181	264	v. Spencer, 3 C. & P. 420	240
v. Davis, Sayer, 163	363	v. Spicer, 1 C. & K. 699	640
v. De Berenger, 3 M. & S. 67	376	v. Story, R. & R. 81	248
v. Delaval, 3 Burr. 1435	371	v. Sussex, 2 B. & S. 664	367
v. Edwards, 3 Russ. on Cr. 1	241	v. Treharne, 1 Mood. C. C. 298	390
v. English, 12 Cox C. C. 171	213, 242, 242 a, 245	v. Waddington, 1 East, 143	439, 442
v. Evans, Bell C. C. 187; 8 Cox C. C. 257	240	v. Wakefield, 2 Town. St. Tr. 112	371
v. Flintan, 1 B. & Ad. 227	87	v. Webb, 14 East, 406	439
v. Gardner, 7 Cox C. C. 136	242	v. Whitehouse, 6 Cox C. C. 38	344
v. Giles, L. & C. 502; 10 Cox C. C. 44	248	v. Whitnash, 7 B. & C. 596	385
v. Gillings, 1 F. & F. 36	183, 292	v. Wickham, 10 Ad. & E. 34	245
v. Gregory, 2 N. & M. 478; 5 B. & Ad. 555	363	v. Williams, 6 C. & P. 390	182
v. Grey, 1 East P. C. 460	371	v. Wilson, 2 C. & K. 527; 2 Cox C. C. 426; 1 Den. C. C. 284	185
v. Gumble, L. R. 2 C. C. 1	182	v. Woodman, 14 Cox C. C. 179	257
v. Hamp, 6 Cox C. C. 167	415	v. Woolley, 1 Den. C. C. 559	245
v. Hart, 1 Mood. C. C. 486; 7 C. & P. 652	185	v. Wroxton, 4 B. & Ad. 640	265
v. Hench, R. & R. 163	183, 292	Rabone v. Williams, 7 T. R. 360	184
v. Henderson, 2 Mood. C. C. 192; Car. & Marsh. 328	240, 262	Radenhurst v. Bates, 3 Bing. 463	819
v. Hevey, 2 East P. C. 858	376	Radford v. Carwile, 13 W. Va. 572	76
v. Hewgill, Dears. 315	213, 242, 242 a	Raffles v. Wichelhaus, 2 H. & C. 906	186
v. Hewitt, 5 Cox C. C. 162	439	Raguet v. Roll, 7 Ohio, 76	338, 339
v. Heymann, L. R. 8 Q. B. 102	376	Raikes v. Todd, 8 A. & E. 846	925
v. Hunter, 10 Cox C. C. 642	248	Railey v. Bagley, 19 La. An. 172	944
v. Keighley, D. & B. 145	259	Railroad Co. v. Commis., 98 U. S. 541	738
v. Kenrick, 5 Q. B. 49	376	v. Howard, 7 Wall. 392	138, 846
v. Lee, L. & C. 309	257	v. Lockwood, 17 Wall. 357	438
v. Lewis, 11 Cox C. C. 404	376	v. Reeves, 10 Wall. 176	309, 310, 319
v. Lord, 12 Q. B. 757	31, 42	v. Schutte, 103 U. S. 118	641
v. Mears, 2 Den. C. C. 79; 4 Cox C. C. 423	371	Railway Co. v. Allerton, 18 Wall. 233	135
v. Middleton, L. R. 2 C. C. 38	187	v. McCarthy, 96 U. S. 258	137, 138, 140
v. Northwingfield, 1 B. & Ad. 912	339	Rainey v. Capps, 22 Ala. 288	382
v. Oliver, cited 4 Taunt. 274	182		
v. Parsons, 1 W. Bl. 392	344		
v. Petrie, 1 Leach, 329	241		
v. Philpotts, 1 C. & K. 112	240		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Rainwater v. Durham, 2 Nott & McC. 524	69	Ranney v. Higby, 5 Wis. 62	877
Raitt v. Mitchell, 4 Camp. 146	709	Rapp v. Rapp, 6 Barr, 45	647
Ralston v. Bell, 2 Dall. 242	722	Rashdall v. Ford, L. R. 2 Eq. 750	264
v. Boady, 20 Ga. 449	348	Ratcliffe v. Anderson, 31 Grat. 105	1062
Ram Coomar v. Chunder Canto, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 186	422	Rathbun v. Rathbun, 40 How. Pr. 328	113 a
Ramloll Thackoorseydass v. Soojumnul Dhondmull, 6 Moo. P. C. 300	451	Raum v. Kaltwasser, 4 Mo. Ap. 573	785
Ramsay v. Warner, 97 Mass. 8	929, 930	Rawden v. Shadwell, Amb. 268	454
Ramsdale v. Horton, 3 Barr, 330	785, 960	Rawdon v. Rawdon, 28 Ala. 565	113
Ramsdell v. Soule, 12 Pick. 126	466	Rawley v. Rawley, L. R. 1 Q. B. D. 460	844, 1018
Ramsey's App., 2 Watts, 228	1017, 1021	Rawlings v. Bell, 1 C. B. 951	214
Ramsey v. Gould, 57 Barb. 398	426	v. Coal Consumers' Co., 43 L. J. M. 111	483
v. McCue, 21 Grat. 349	698	Rawlins v. Jenkins, 4 Q. B. 419	635
v. R. R., 3 Tenn. Ch. 170	555	v. Wickham, 3 De G. & J. 304	245, 251, 282
v. Smith, 32 N. J. Eq. 28	207	Rawls v. Deshler, 3 Keyes, 572	793
Ramsgate Hotel v. Montefiore, L. R. 1 Ex. 109	9	v. Ins. Co., 27 N. Y. 282	252
Ramsour v. Thomas, 10 Ired. 165	924	Rawlyns v. Vandyke, 3 Esp. 250	86
Ramuz v. Crowe, 1 Ex. 167	694, 959	Rawson v. Clark, 70 Ill. 656	326
Rance's case, L. R. 6 Ch. 104	964	v. Copland, 2 Sand. Ch. 251	721
Rand v. Hale, 3 W. Va. 495	810 a	v. Johnson, 1 East, 203	581, 584
v. Mather, 11 Cush. 1	338	v. Samuel, 1 Cr. & Ph. 161	1010
v. Webber, 64 Me. 191	190, 233	Rawstorne v. Gandell, 15 M. & W. 304	821, 950, 1035
Randall v. Farnum, 52 Vt. 539	279	Ray v. Adden, 50 N. H. 82	92
v. Howard, 2 Black, 585	235	v. Haines, 52 Ill. 485	34, 51
v. Kehler, 60 Me. 37	709, 910	v. Mackin, 100 Ill. 246	405, 443
v. Lynch, 2 Camp. 352;	311	v. Thompson, 12 Cush. 281	590
12 East, 179	608	v. Tubbs, 50 Vt. 688	53
v. Marble, 69 Me. 310	608	Raymond v. Baar, 13 S. & R. 318	744
v. Moon, 12 C. B. 261	942, 967	v. Bearnard, 12 Johns. 275	742, 973
v. Newson, L. R. 2 Q. B. D. 102	221, 223, 248, 904, 905, 906	v. Green, 12 Neb. 215	1010
v. Rich, 11 Mass. 494	758	v. Johnson, 11 Johns. 488	837
v. Sweet, 1 Denio, 460	72	v. Leavitt, 46 Mich. 447	442
v. Thornton, 43 Me. 226	219, 647	v. Loyl, 10 Barb. 483	68, 512
Randle v. Gould, 8 E. & B. 457	614	v. Minton, L. R. 1 Ex. 244	312, 607, 613
Randolph v. Randolph, 3 Rand. Va. 490	761	v. Pritchard, 24 Ind. 318	785
Ranelagh v. Melton, 2 Dr. & S. 278	887	v. Sellick, 10 Conn. 480	498
Rangeley v. Spring, 21 Me. 130	89	Rea v. Durkee, 25 Ill. 503	92
Ranger v. R. R., 5 H. L. C. 72	275	Reab v. Moore, 19 Johns. 337	717, 718
Rankin v. Childs, 9 Mo. 673	570	Read v. Decker, 67 N. Y. 182	593
v. Demott, 61 Penn. St. 263	984	v. Earle, 12 Gray, 423	85
v. Woodworth, 3 P. & W. 48	895	v. Goldring, 2 M. & S. 86	942, 982
Ranlett v. Moore, 21 N. H. 336	996	v. Hall, 57 N. H. 482	78
Rann v. Hughes, 7 T. R. 350 n.	514, 532, 684		
v. Ins. Co., 59 N. Y. 387	670		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Read v. Hitchings, 71 Me. 590	516, 533	Reel v. Ewing, 4 Mo. Ap. 569	259
v. Howe, 39 Iowa, 553	161	Rees v. Overbaugh, 6 Cow. 746	702
v. Hutchinson, 3 Camp. 352	960	v. Watts, 11 Ex. 410	1022
v. Legard, 6 Exch. 636	101	Reese v. Wyman, 9 Ga. 430	241
v. R. R., 60 Mo. 199	309	Reese River Co. v. Smith, L. R. 2	
v. Rann, 10 B. & C. 438	707, 713	Ch. 604; 4 H. L. 64	
v. Walker, 18 Ala. 323	241	214, 241, 243, 255, 287	
Reade v. Livingston, 3 Johns. Ch. 481	377	Reeside v. Knox, 2 Whart. 233	599
Readhead v. R. R., L. R. 2 Q. B. 412; 4 Q. B. 379	302	Reeves v. Butcher, 2 Vroom, 224	384, 389
Ready v. Bragg, 1 Head (Tenn.) 511	85	v. Hearne, 1 M. & W. 323	999
Real Est. Ins. Co. v. Roessle, 1 Gray, 336	5	v. Reeves, 2 Phill. 125	265
Real Est. Sav. Inst. v. Linder, 74 Penn. St. 371	198, 751, 754	v. Watts, L. R. 1 Q. B. 412	784, 788, 804
Reay v. Richardson, 2 C. M. & R. 422	1005	Regan v. Howe, 121 Mass. 424	107 a, 677, 679
v. White, 3 Tyrwh. 596; 1 C. & M. 748	1005	Rehoboth v. Hunt, 1 Pick. 224	1062
Receiver, etc. v. First Nat. Bk., 34 N. J. Eq. 450	507	Reichart v. Castator, 5 Binn. 109	235, 377
Receivers v. Gaslight Co., 3 Zab. 283	1026	Reid v. Flippen, 47 Ga. 273	259
Rede v. Farr, 6 M. & S. 121	615	v. Hibbard, 6 Wis. 175	504, 1003
Redfern v. Bryning, L. R. 6 Ch. D. 133	202	v. Hoskins, 4 E. & B. 979; 5 E. & B. 729; 6 E. & B. 953	305, 885 a
Redgrave v. Hurd, L. R. 20 Ch. D. 1	214, 241, 245	v. Lamar, 1 Strobb. Eq. 27	77
Redington v. Roberts, 25 Vt. 686	249, 258	Reiser v. Savings Fund, 39 Penn. St. 137	1061
Redpath v. Tel. Co., 112 Mass. 71	438, 572	Relf v. Eberly, 23 Iowa, 467	289, 919
Reed v. Bank, 127 Mass. 295	784	Relyea v. New Haven Co., 42 Conn. 579	793
v. Bartlett, 19 Pick. 273	1002, 1006	Remillard v. Prescott, 8 Oreg. 37	208
v. Batchelder, 1 Met. 559	36	Remington S. M. Co. v. Kezertee, 49 Wis. 409	570 a
v. Boardman, 20 Pick. 441	923, 927	Remon v. Hayward, 2 A. & E. 666	726
v. Breeden, 61 Penn. St. 460	888	Renard v. Turner, 42 Ala. 117	943, 982
v. Hall, 57 N. H. 482	89	Reneaux v. Teakle, 8 Exch. 680	84
v. Hastings, 61 Ill. 266	219	Renshaw v. Lefferman, 51 Md. 277	207, 285
v. Ins. Co., 95 U. S. 23	206	Rensselaer Glass Factory v. Reid, 5 Cow. 587	528, 756, 763
v. Kilburn Soc., L. R. 10 Q. B. 264	620	Respublica v. Hevice, 2 Yeates, 114	371
v. Lawton, 2 Watts, 50	239	Reston v. Mo. Lead Co., 51 Mo. 43	138
v. McGrew, 5 Ohio, 375	288, 750	Reuss v. Picksley, L. R. 1 Ex. 342	27, 647
v. Marshall, 90 Penn. St. 345	1018	Reuter v. Sala, L. R. 4 C. P. D. 239	900
v. Norris, 2 Myl. & Cr. 361	161	Reutschler v. Huccke, 3 Ill. Ap. 144	1023
v. Paul, 131 Mass. 129	721	Reybold v. Voorhees, 30 Penn. St. 116	580
v. Peterson, 91 Ill. 288	270, 282	Reynell v. Spry, 1 De G. M. & G. 656	236, 242 a, 246, 249, 252, 340, 345, 353, 421
v. Shaw, 1 Blackf. 245	1032	Reynolds v. Caldwell, 51 Penn. St. 298	594
v. Shenck, 3 Dev. L. 65	633	v. Copeland, 71 Ind. 422	144
v. Sidener, 32 Ind. 373	215	v. Dechaums, 24 Tex. 174	267
v. Tioga Co., 66 Ind. 21	1016		
v. Upton, 10 Pick. 522	16, 589, 954, 956		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Reynolds v. Douglass, 12 Pet.	497 570	Richardson v. Beede, 43 Me.	161 938
v. Ferree, 86 Ill.	570 278	v. Boright, 9 Vt.	368 60
v. Kenyon, 43 Barb.	585 141	v. Boynton, 12 Allen,	138 210
v. McCurry, 100 Ill.	356 47	v. Brown, 1 Cow.	255 532
v. Nelson, 6 Madd.	18 892	v. Chemical Labora-	tory, 9 Met. 42 977
v. Nugent, 25 Ind.	328 500	v. Crandall, 48 N. Y.	348 405
v. R. R., 11 Neb.	186 312, 603	v. Dubois, L. R. 5 Q.	B. 51 88
v. Reynolds, 3 Allen,	605 265	v. Duncan, 3 N. H.	508 150, 151
v. Stevenson, 4 Ind.	619 382	v. Dunn, 2 Q. B.	218 7
v. Swatser, 15 Gray,	78 86	v. Gosser, 26 Penn. St.	335 505
v. Wheeler, 10 C. B. N.	S. 561 765	v. Horton, 7 Beav.	112 537
Rhea v. Rhenner, 1 Pet.	105 76. 81	v. Ins. Co., 46 Me.	394 338 a
Rhode v. Alley, 27 Tex.	443 249	v. Jackson, 8 M. & W.	298 977
Rhodes v. Bate, L. R. 1 Ch.	252 103, 161, 162, 163, 168	v. Kimball, 28 Me.	463 730
v. Sparks, 6 Barr,	473 360	v. McLemore, 5 Bax.	586 1032
Ricard v. Sanderson, 41 N. Y.	179 786 a	v. Mellish, 2 Bing.	229 407, 535
Rice's App., 79 Penn. St.	168 282	v. Peacock, 33 N. J.	Eq. 597 431, 433
Rice v. Barnard, 127 Mass.	241 752	v. Richardson, L. R. 3	Eq. 686 496, 538
v. Barrett, 116 Mass.	312 6, 249	v. Rowland, 40 Conn.	565 361, 422, 429
v. Churchill, 2 Denio,	145 575, 882 a, 990	v. Sibley, 11 Allen,	65 137
v. Codman, 1 Allen,	377 630	v. Strong, 13 Ired. L.	106 101, 119, 121
v. Dewey, 54 Barb.	455 954	v. Williams, 49 Me.	558 7, 756
v. Dwight Man. Co., 2 Cush.	80 186, 298, 717	v. Williams, L. R. 6	Q. B. 276 1046
v. Forsyth, 41 Md.	389 230, 906	Riche v. Ashbury R'way Car. Co.,	L. R. 9 Ex. 224 128, 135, 137
v. Gist, 1 Strobb.	82 452	Riches v. Brigges, Yel.	4 505
v. Goddard, 14 Pick.	293 520	Richmond v. Gray, 3 Allen,	25 887
v. Gordon, 11 Beav.	265 165	Richmond, etc. R. R. v. R. R.,	13 How. 71
v. Manley, 66 N. Y.	82 812		1063, 1064
v. Man. Co., 2 Cush.	80 298	v. Snead, 19	Grat. 354
v. Peet, 15 Johns.	503 100, 114, 119, 245, 742		138, 803
v. R. R., 32 Oh. St.	380 77	Richter v. Selin, 8 S. & R.	425 744
v. Shook, 27 Ark.	137 473	Rick v. Kelly, 30 Penn. St.	527 744
v. Shute, 1 Smith L. C., 7th	Am. ed. 870 833	Ricker v. Fairbanks, 40 Me.	43 657
v. Wood, 113 Mass.	133 376	Ricks v. Dillahunty, 8 Port.	134 260
v. Woods, 21 Pick.	30 1037	Riddell v. Johnson, 26 Grat.	152 161
Rich v. Johnson, 2 Pinney,	88 899	Riddle v. Hall, S. C. Penn.	1881 ; 13 Rep. 185 151 a
v. Lord, 18 Pick.	322 1035, 1037	Rider v. Ins. Co., 20 Pick.	259 788
Richards v. Allen, 17 Me.	296 711	Ridgway v. Bowman, 7 Cush.	268 668
v. Assurance Ass., L. R.	6 C. P. 591 17	v. Day, 13 Penn. St.	208 573
v. Bluck, 6 C. B.	437 337, 620, 654, 662	v. English, 2 Zab.	409 719
v. Heather, 1 B. & Ald.	29 832, 833		
v. James, 2 Ex.	471 1019		
v. Lewis, 11 C. B.	1035 697		
v. R. R., 44 N. H.	127 138		
v. Shaw, 67 Ill.	222 899		
Richardson's case, 2 Story,	571 885		
Richardson v. Akin, 87 Ill.	138 1067		
v. Barnes, 4 Ex.	128 869		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Ridgway v. Market Co., 3 Ad. & El. 171	717	Ritter v. Singmaster, 73 Penn. St. 400	960
v. Sneyd, Ray, 627	298, 303	River Wear Com'ers v. Adamson, L. R. 2 App. Ca. 743	360
v. Wharton, 6 H. L. C. 238	5	Rivers v. Gregg, 5 Rich. Eq. 274	69
Ridley v. Ridley, 11 Jurist N. S. 475	525	Roach v. Quick, 9 Wend. 238	68
Ridlon v. Davis, 51 Vt. 457	1006	v. Thompson, M. & M. 487	765
Ricker v. Fairbanks, 40 Me. 43	657	Robarts v. Tucker, 16 Q. B. 560	763
Rigby v. Hewitt, 5 Exch. 240	1043	Robb v. Mann, 11 Penn. St. 300	498
Riggins v. R. R., 73 Mo. 598	643	v. Montgomery, 20 Johns. 15	582
Riggs v. Bullingham, Cro. Eliz. 715	514	Robbins v. Ayres, 10 Mo. 538	788
v. Fisk, 64 Ind. 100	61	v. Eaton, 10 N. H. 561	63
v. Roberts, 85 N. C. 151	513	v. Luce, 4 Mass. 474	871, 990
v. Tract Soc., 84 N. Y. 330; rev'g 19 Hun, 481	102, 106	Robert v. Garnie, 3 Caines, 14	924
Rigsbee v. Trees, 21 Ind. 227	202	Roberts's Appeal, 86 Penn. St. 84	35
Riley v. Jordan, 122 Mass. 231		Roberts v. Beatty, 2 Pen. & W. 63	
	348, 374		621, 624, 712, 872, 882, 898, 987, 990
v. Kershaw, 52 Mo. 224	533	v. Berry, 3 D. M. & G. 284	888
v. Mallory, 33 Conn. 201		v. Brett, 18 C. B. 561; 11 H. L. Cas. 337	558, 886
	47, 48, 50	v. Bury Co., L. R. 4 C. P. 755; 5 C. P. 310	312, 594
v. Taber, 9 Gray, 372	526	v. Carter, 38 N. Y. 107	844
v. Vanhouten, 4 How. Miss. 428	655	v. Cocke, 28 Grat. 207	1062
v. Willis, 5 Whart. 145	738	v. Cooper, 20 How. 467	422
Rindge v. Coleraine, 11 Gray, 157	427	v. Fisher, 43 N. Y. 159	960
Rindskopf v. De Ruyter, 39 Mich. 1	343	v. Hardy, 3 M. & S. 533	473
Rinehart v. Olwine, 5 W. & S. 157	549	v. Havelock, 3 B. & Ad. 404	607, 899
Ring v. Neale, 114 Mass. 111	617	v. McNeeley, 7 Jones L. 536	463
Ringo v. Binns, 10 Pet. 269	378	v. Morgan, 2 Cow. 438	219
Ripley v. Chipman, 13 Vt. 268	900	v. Smith, 4 H. & N. 315	588
v. Gelston, 9 Johns. 201		v. Watkins, 46 L. J. Q. B. 552	77
	730, 737, 738	v. Wiggin, 1 N. H. 73	48
v. Greenleaf, 2 Vt. 129	954	Robertson v. Amazon Tug Co., L. R. 7 Q. B. D. 598; rev'g 45 L. T. N. S. 317	221, 585
v. M'Clure, 4 Exch. 345		v. Bank, 41 Mich. 356	955
	579, 604, 889	v. Clarkson, 9 B. Mon. 506	245
v. Paige, 12 Vt. 353	658	v. Cole, 12 Tex. 356	265
Rippinghall v. Lloyd, 5 B. & Ad. 742	571, 621	v. French, 4 East, 130	
Rippy v. Gant, 4 Ired. Eq. 443	158, 159		632, 652
Risch v. Von Lillienthal, 34 Wis. 250	245	v. Hay, 91 Penn. St. 242	696
Rising v. Patterson, 5 Whart. 316		v. March, 3 Scam. 198	528
	504, 997	v. Reed, 47 Penn. St. 115	785
Risley v. R. R., 62 N. Y. 240	378	v. Smith, 18 Johns. 459	830
v. Smith, 64 N. Y. 576	603	Robeson v. French, 12 Met. 24	382
Ritchie v. Atkinson, 10 East, 295		Robins v. May, 11 A. & E. 213	599
	330, 607	Robinson's case, L. R. 4 Ch. 322	17
v. Hayward, 71 Mo. 560	1016	Robinson v. Barrows, 48 Me. 186	368
v. Smith, 6 C. B. 462	348, 365	v. Batchelder, 4 N. H. 40	523, 870, 977, 988
v. Summers, 3 Yeates, 531	230	v. Bland, 2 Burr. 1077	463
Rittenhouse v. Tel. Co., 44 N. Y. 263	4	v. Buck, 71 Penn. St. 386; 8 Phil. 37	399
Ritter v. Ritter, 5 Blackf. 81	265		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Robinson v. Chamberlain, 34 N. Y. 389	786	Robson v. Doyle, 3 E. & B. 396	822
v. Charleston, 2 Rich. 317	198	v. Drummond, 2 B. & Ad. 303	854
v. Cook, 6 Taunt. 336	978	v. Miller, 12 S. C. 586	219, 221
v. Crenshaw, 2 St. & Port. 276	483, 486	v. Oliver, 10 Q. B. 704	958
v. Cushman, 2 Denio, 149	719	Roby v. West, 4 N. H. 285	338, 344, 365, 509
v. Davison, L. R. 6 Exch. 269		Rochester v. Bank, 13 Wis. 432	199
180, 300, 323, 547		Rockafellow v. Baker, 41 Penn. St. 319	245
v. Doolittle, 12 Vt. 246	924	v. Newcomb, 57 Ill. 186	161
v. Ezzell, 72 N. C. 231	738	Rock Creek v. Strong, 96 U. S. 271	143
v. Fiske, 25 Me. 401	657	Rocke, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 6 Ch. 795	739
v. Gould, 11 Cush. 55		Rockford, etc. R. R. v. Lent, 63 Ill. 288	898
146, 150, 151 a, 532		v. Shunick, 65 Ill. 223	270
v. Green, 3 Met. (Mass.) 159	511	v. Wilcox, 66 Ill. 417	130
v. Harvey, 82 Ill. 58	219	Rock Hill College v. Jones, 47 Md. 1	1062
v. Hawksford, 9 Q. B. 52	953	Rockwell v. Hubbell, 2 Doug. 197	1067
v. Holt, 39 N. H. 557	377	Rockwood v. Wiggin, 16 Gray, 402	496
v. Hoskins, 14 Bush, 393	58	Roden v. Small Arms Co., 46 L. J. Q. B. 213	199
v. Howes, 20 N. Y. 84	1026	Rodgers v. Maw, 15 M. & W. 444	736, 758
v. Ins. Co., 42 N. Y. 54	352, 473	v. Niles, 11 Oh. St. 48	221, 223, 904, 905
v. Kime, 70 N. Y. 147	633	v. Phillips, 40 N. Y. 519	877
v. Leavitt, 7 N. H. 73	972	v. State, 50 Ala. 102	390
v. Macdonnell, 5 M. & S. 228	298	Rodick v. Gandell, 1 De G. M. & G. 763	839, 845
v. M'Donnell, 2 B. & Ald. 134	235	Rodman v. Thalheimer, 75 Penn. St. 232	249, 258, 282
v. Noble, 8 Pet. 181	902	Rodriguez v. Habersham, 1 Spears, 314	230
v. Pickering, L. R. 16 Ch. D. 660	77	Roehner v. Ins. Co., 63 N. Y. 160	547
v. R. R., 9 Fed. Rep. 129	793	Roesner v. Hermann, 8 Fed. Rep. 782	438
v. Raynor, 28 N. Y. 494	719	Roffey v. Shallcross, 4 Mad. 227	748
v. Read, 9 B. & C. 449		Rogers, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 15 Ch. D. 207	453
854, 955, 957		v. Fire Co., 9 Wend. 611	721
v. Robinson, 4 Md. Ch. 176	166	v. Gosnell, 58 Mo. 589	785, 786 a, 853
v. Sohly, 6 Ga. 515	165	v. Higgins, 48 Ill. 211	77, 89
v. Stuart, 68 Me. 61	793	v. Higgins, 57 Ill. 244	158, 242, 288
v. Touray, 1 M. & S. 217	705	v. Hurd, 4 Day, 57	43, 63
v. Waddington, 13 Q. B. 753	895	v. Ingham, L. R. 3 Ch. D. 351	198, 750
v. Ward, 8 Q. B. 920	979	v. Langford, 1 C. & M. 637	744, 853, 958
v. Weeks, 56 Me. 102		v. Mining Co., 9 Fed. Rep. 721	426
36, 48, 50, 63		v. Odell, 36 Mich. 411	208
v. Wilkinson, 3 Price, 538	830		
Robinson Works v. Chandler, 56 Ind. 575	27, 224		
Robison v. Beall, 26 Ga. 17	421, 429		
Robson v. Bohn, 27 Minn. 333	580		
v. Dodds, L. R. 8 Eq. 301	139		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Rogers v. Place, 29 Ind. 577	264	Rosevelt v. Fulton, 2 Cow. 129	214
v. Price, 3 Y. & J. 28	709, 757	Rosewarne v. Billings, 15 C. B.	
v. Rogers, 4 Paige, 516	90, 395	N. S. 316; 33 L. J. C. P. 55	
v. Rutter, 11 Gray, 410	983		336, 453
v. Salmon, 8 Paige, 559	258	Rosher v. Williams, L. R. 20 Eq.	
v. Saunders, 16 Me. 92	890	210	165, 519, 588
v. Steele, 24 Vt. 513	716	Ross v. Bradshaw, 1 W. Bl. 312	256
v. Rathbun, 1 Johns. Ch. 367	469	v. Kennison, 38 Iowa. 396	786 a
v. Tel. Co., 78 Ind. 169; 25 A. L. J. 203	382	v. Milne, 12 Leigh, 204	784, 790
v. Walker, 6 Barr, 371	107	v. Overton, 3 Call, 309	318, 697
v. Walsh, 12 Neb. 28	744	v. Sadgbeer, 21 Wend. 166	434
v. Ward, 8 Allen, 387	77	v. Terry, 63 N. Y. 613	744
Rohan v. Hanson, 11 Cush. 44	930	Rosseau v. Cull, 14 Vt. 83	924
Roland v. Gundy, 5 Oh. 202	734, 736	Rossiter v. Miller, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 648; 3 App. Cas. 1124	5, 646
Rolfe v. Flower, 3 Moore, P. C. N. S. 365; L. R. 1 P. C. 27	862	v. Rossiter, 8 Wend. 494	810 a
Rölker v. Ins. Co., 3 Keyes, 171	662	Rotch v. Hawes, 12 Pick. 136	7
Roll v. Raguet, 4 Ohio, 400; 7 Ohio, 76	340, 483	Roth v. Crissy, 30 Penn. St. 145	285
Rollins v. Marsh, 128 Mass. 116	505, 521, 533	v. Palmer, 27 Barb. 652	290
Roman v. Mali, 42 Md. 513	161	Rothchild v. Rowe, 44 Vt. 389	284
Rommel v. Wingate, 103 Mass. 327	4	Rothschild v. Currie, 1 Q. B. 43	797
Rood v. Winslow, 2 Doug. (Mich.) 68	150	Roundtree v. Baker, 52 Ill. 241	361
Roof v. Stafford, 7 Cow. 179	31	Rounsavell v. Pease, 45 Wis. 506	28, 207
Rooke v. Kensington, 2 K. & J. 753	664	Rouquette v. Overmann, L. R. 10 Q. B. 525	573, 795
Root v. Bancroft, 8 Gray, 619	291	Rourke v. Short, 5 E. & B. 904	453
v. French, 13 Wend. 570	247	Rousillon v. Rousillon, L. R. 14 Ch. D. 351; 42 L. T. N. S. 679	430, 433, 436, 437
v. Lord, 23 Vt. 568	584	Rouskulp v. Kershner, 49 Md. 516	461
v. R. R., 55 N. Y. 636	140	Routledge v. Grant, 4 Bing. 653	10, 13, 524
v. Reynolds, 32 Vt. 139	376	Roux v. Salvador, 3 Bing. N. C. 266	569
Roper v. Holland, 3 A. & E. 99	777	Rowan v. Kirkpatrick, 14 Ill. 1	726
v. Johnson, L. R. 8 C. P. 167	580	Rowe v. Hopwood, L. R. 4 Q. B. 1	73
v. Lendon, 1 E. & E. 825	569	v. Young, 2 Brod. & B. 165	873
v. Trustees of Sangamon Lodge, 91 Ill. 518	570 a	Rowell v. Jewett, 69 Me. 293	608
Roscorla v. Thomas, 3 Q. B. 234	494, 514	v. Klein, 44 Ind. 290	85
Rose v. Brown, Kirby, 293	980	v. Mitchell, 68 Me. 21	972
v. Hall, 26 Conn. 392	504, 1002	Rowland v. R. R., 73 Mo. 619	717
v. Hurley, 39 Ind. 77	259	Rowley v. Bigelow, 12 Pick. 307	249, 258, 285, 291, 793, 878
v. Mynatt, 7 Yerg. 30	427	v. Flannelly, 30 N. J. Eq. 612	208
v. Poulton, 2 B. & Ad. 822	806, 814	v. Ins. Co., 3 Keyes, 557	338 a
v. Savory, 2 Bing. N. C. 145	780	v. Stoddard, 7 Johns. 207	831
v. Tel. Co., 3 Abb. Pr. (N. S.) 408; 34 How. Pr. 308	791	Rowntree v. Jacob, 2 Taunt. 141	1031
v. Truax, 21 Barb. 361	338, 402	Roy v. Beaufort, 2 Atk. 190	144
Roseman v. Canovan, 43 Cal. 110	245	Royal v. Sprinkle, 1 Jones, L. 505	278
Rosenblatt v. Townsley, 73 Mo. 536	338, 382	Royal Bank v. Turquand, 5 El. & B. 248; 6 El. & B. 327	140
Rosenstock v. Tormey, 32 Md. 169	278	Royal Mail Co. v. Braham, L. R. 2 Ap. Ca. 381	127
Rosenthal v. Mayhugh, 33 Oh. St. 155	81	Royce v. Charlton, L. R. 8 Q. B. D. 1	872
		Roys v. Johnson, 7 Gray, 162	346

;

540

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Sainter v. Ferguson, 7 C. B. 716	433	Sandlin v. Robbins, 62 Ala. 477	377
Salaman v. Glover, L. R. 20 Eq. 444	207	Sands v. Codwise, 4 Johns. 536	285
Salvadore v. Ins. Co., 22 La. An. 338	24	v. Crooke, 46 N. Y. 564	708
Sale v. Lambert, L. R. 18 Eq. 1	804	v. Ins. Co., 50 N. Y. 626	547
Salem Bk. v. Gloucester Bk., 17 Mass. 1	234	v. Lyon, 18 Conn. 18	895, 897, 983
Salem Milldam v. Ropes, 6 Pick. 23	137	Sanford v. Bulkley, 30 Conn. 344	977
Salisbury v. Stainer, 19 Wend. 159	223, 224, 915	v. Howard, 29 Ala. 684	658
Salmon v. Bennett, 1 Conn. 525	377	v. Messer, 1 Holmes, 149	436
v. Davis, 4 Binn. 375	946	Sanger v. Dun, 47 Wis. 615	196, 662
Salomons v. Laing, 12 Beav. 339, 377	131, 135, 139	Sangston v. Maitland, 11 Gill & J. 286	943
Salter v. Bradshaw, 26 Beav. 161	169	Sankey v. Bank, 78 Penn. St. 48	260
v. Burt, 20 Wend. 205	881, 897	Sansom v. Bell, 2 Camp. 39	667
Saltmarsh v. Smith, 32 Ala. 404	323	Santos v. Illidge, 8 C. B. N. S. 861	361
v. Tuthill, 13 Ala. 390	382, 386	Sapp v. Phelps, 92 Ill. 588	662
Saltus v. Everett, 20 Wend. 267	793	Sapsford v. Fletcher, 4 T. R. 511	7, 760, 762
Sampson v. Bowdoinham, 36 Me. 78	132	Saratoga Bk. v. King, 44 N. Y. 87	338
v. Easterby, 9 B. & C. 505	663	Saratoga R. R. v. Row, 24 Wend. 74	288, 919
v. Shaw, 101 Mass. 145	340, 349, 353, 357, 442, 452, 453, 453 b	Sard v. Rhodes, 1 M. & W. 153	852, 955, 996, 1004
Samson v. Thornton, 3 Metc. 275	677	Sargeant v. Butts, 21 Vt. 99	384
Samuel v. Holladay, 1 Woolw. 400	139	Sargent, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 17 Eq. 273	687
v. Marshall, 3 Leigh, 567	110, 159	v. Currier, 49 N. H. 310	230, 760
Sanborn v. Benedict, 78 Ill. 309	298	v. Graham, 5 N. H. 440	971, 978, 983
Sander v. Hoffman, 64 N. Y. 248	433	v. M'Farland, 8 Pick. 500	759
Sanders v. Bank, 13 Ala. 353	504, 1003	v. Morris, 3 B. & Ald. 277	793
v. Clason, 13 Minn. 379	785	Sarter v. Gordon, 2 Hill Ch. 121	166
v. Filley, 12 Pick. 554	788, 789	Sartwell v. Horton, 28 Vt. 370	149
v. Knox, 57 Ala. 80	929	Sasportas v. Jennings, 1 Bay, 470	149, 737
v. Rodway, 16 Beav. 207	90, 395	Sasscer v. Bank, 4 Md. 409	390
Sanderson v. Bell, 2 Cr. & M. 304	945	Satterlee v. Jones, 3 Duer, 102	405
v. Brown, 57 Me. 308	494	v. Ten Eyck, 7 Cow. 480	1017
v. Lamberton, 6 Binn. 129	793	Satterthwaite v. Ins. Co., 14 Penn. St. 393	256
v. Morgan, 39 N. Y. 231	478	Sattler v. Marino, 30 La. An. Pt. I. 355	376
v. Symonds, 1 B. & B. 426	696, 701	Saunders v. Evans, 8 H. L. Ca. 721	674
Sandford v. Handy, 23 Wend. 260	260	v. Frost, 5 Pick. 259	977, 980
Sandilands, <i>in re</i> , L. R. 6 C. P. 411	680, 681, 703	v. Hatterman, 2 Ired. 32	244, 245
Sandill v. Franklin, L. R. 10 C. P. 377	894	Saunderson v. Marr, 1 H. Black. 75	39
Sandiman v. Breach, 7 B. & C. 96	385	v. Piper, 5 Bing. N. C. 425	204
		Savage v. Everman, 70 Penn. St. 315	1001
		v. Jackson, 19 Ga. 305	259, 261
		v. Stevens, 126 Mass. 207	241, 245

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Savage v. Mallory, 4 Allen, 492	343	Schermerhorn v. Vanderheyden,	
Savage Man. Co. v. Armstrong,		1 Johns. 139	540, 784
19 Me. 147	557, 585, 601, 871	Schettinger v. Hopple, 3 Grant	
Savannah, etc. R. R. v. Wilcox,		Ca. 54	207
48 Ga. 432	305	Schilling v. Durst, 42 Penn. St.	
Savary v. Goe, 3 Wash. C. C. 140		126	550
	885, 871, 980, 990	v. Short, 15 W. Va. 780	282
v. Savary, 3 Iowa, 271	463	Schlesinger v. Stratton, 9 R. I.	
Saveland v. Green, 40 Wis. 431	27	578	361, 590, 877
Savery v. King, 5 H. L. C. 627		Schliet v. State, 31 Ind. 246	382
	157, 161, 169, 285	Schmucker v. Sibert, 18 Kans.	
Savoury v. Chapman, 8 Dow. 656	944	104	786 a
Saward v. Anstey, 2 Bing. 519	641	Schneider v. Heath, 3 Camp. 506	
Sawyer, in re, 14 N. Bank. Reg.			229, 251
241	379	v. Staihr, 20 Mo. 269	31
v. Hovey, 3 Allen, 331		Schnell v. Chicago, 38 Ill. 382	89
	198, 207, 208	v. Nell, 17 Ind. 29	165, 518
v. Lufkin, 56 Me. 308		Schnerr v. Lemp, 19 Mo. 40	717
	101, 106, 121, 123	Schnitzer v. Print Works, 114	
v. Phaley, 33 Vt. 69	424	Mass. 123	630, 917
v. Prickett, 19 Wal. 146		Schnuckle v. Bierman, 89 Ill. 454	87
	257, 259	Schoch v. Garrett, 69 Penn. St.	
v. R. R., 22 Wis. 403	580	144	719
v. Taggart, 14 Bush, 727		Schofield v. Corbett, 11 Q. B. 779	
	346, 453, 453 a		1021, 1022
v. Tappan, 14 N. H. 352	924	Scholefield v. Eichelberger, 7 Pet.	
Saxon Life Ass. Soc., in re, 2 J. &		586	94, 473
H. 408	198	v. Templer, 4 De G. &	
Saxty v. Wilkin, 11 M. & W. 622	963	J. 429	288
Say v. Barnes, 4 S. & R. 112	161	Scholey v. Halsey, 72 N. Y. 578	740
v. Barwick, 1 Ves. & B. 195	119	v. Mumford, 60 N. Y. 498;	
Sayer v. Wagstaff, 5 Beav. 415		64 N. Y. 521	149
	857, 954, 956	v. R. R., L. R. 9 Eq. 266 a	288
Sayles v. Sayles, 1 Fost. 312	394	v. Walton, 12 M. & W.	
v. Wellman, 10 R. I. 465	382	510	965
Saylor v. Bushong, Sup. Ct. Penn.		Schommer v. Farwell, 56 Ill. 542	486
1882; 12 Weekly Notes, 81		Schomp v. Schenck, 40 N. J. L.	
	836, 840	195	421, 422, 427
Sayre v. Wheeler, 31 Iowa, 112;		School District v. Dauchy, 25 Conn.	
32 Iowa, 559	382	530	311, 314
Scammon v. Campbell, 75 Ill. 223	803	v. Lynch, 33 Conn.	
Scanlan v. Cobb, 85 Ill. 296		330	631, 647
	102, 107, 111, 119	School Trustees v. Bennett, 3	
v. Wright, 13 Pick. 523	202	Dutch. 513	311
Scarborough v. Reynolds, 13 Rich.		Schoonover v. Dougherty, 65 Ind.	
98	224	463	205
Scarfe v. Morgan, 4 M. & W. 270	352	Schotsmans v. R. R., L. R. 2 Ch.	
Scarlett v. Stein, 40 Md. 512	887	332	877
Schaeffer v. Bonham, 95 Ill. 368	141	Schramm v. O'Connor, 98 Ill. 539	
Schafroth v. Ambs, 46 Mo. 114	77		118, 261
Schanck v. Arrowsmith, 1 Stock.		Schroeder v. Lahrman, 28 Minn.	
314	954, 955	75	972
Schaumburg v. U. S., 103 U. S.		Schuchardt v. Allens, 1 Wall. 359	709
667	1012	Schultz v. Culbertson, 46 Wis. 313;	
Scheffer v. Tozier, 25 Minn. 478	930	49 Wis. 122	144, 151, 737
Schenck v. Strong, 1 South. 87	52, 53	Schumitsch v. Ins. Co., 48 Wis.	
v. Stumpf, 6 Mo. Ap. 381	89	26	338 a
Schenke v. Rowell, 7 Daly, 286	594	Schurmeier v. R. R., 10 Minn. 82	1064
Schermerhorn v. Talman, 4 Kern.		Schutt v. Large, 6 Barb. 373	291
93	343, 353, 364	Schuyler v. Russ, 2 Caines, 202	224

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Schuylkill Nav. Co. v. Harris, 5		Seagrave v. Marine Ins. Co., L. R.	
W. & S. 28	495	1 C. P. 305	21, 455
v. Moore, 2		Seagraves v. Alton, 13 Ill.	366 130
Whart.		Seal v. Duffy, 4 Barr,	274 288
477	432	Seaman v. Seaman, 12 Wend.	
Schwabacker v. Riddle, 99 Ill.	343	381	505
	242, 245	v. Whitney, 24 Wend.	
Schwalm v. Holmes, 49 Cal.	665 437	260	728
Schwartz v. Saunders, 46 Ill.	18	Searle v. Galbraith, 73 Ill.	269 117 a
89, 326, 714,	745	Searles v. Sadgrove, 5 E. & B.	639
Schweizer v. Tracy, 76 Ill.	345 249		977, 986
Schwickerath v. Cooksey, 53 Me.		Sears v. Boston, 16 Pick.	357 305
75	253	v. Giddey, 41 Mich.	590 92
Scoby v. Ross, 13 Ind.	117 427	v. R. R., 14 Allen,	433 25
Scofield v. State, 54 Ga.	635 131, 270	v. Schafer, 2 Seld.	268 159
Scotson v. Pegg, 6 H. & N.	295 501	Seaton v. Benedict, 5 Bing.	28; 2
Scott v. Baker, 3 W. Va.	285 810 a	Sm. L. C. 7th Eng. edit.	475 84
v. Bank, 72 Penn. St.	471 320	Seaver v. Phelps, 11 Pick.	304
v. Coal Co., 89 Penn. St.	231	106, 107, 114,	245
	580, 899	Seawell v. Henry, 6 Ala.	226 985
v. Duffy, 14 Penn. St.	18	Secombe v. Edwards, 28 Beav.	
	340, 361	440	657
v. Ebury, L. R. 2 C. P.	255 598	Seddon v. Senate, 13 East,	63 642, 836
v. Fields, 7 Ohio, Pt. II.,	90 887	Sedgwick v. Stanton, 14 N. Y.	289
v. Fisher, 4 T. B. Monroe,		402, 421, 422,	429
387	924	See v. Partridge, 2 Duer,	463 585
v. Fritz, 51 Penn. St.	418 1021	Seear v. Cohen, 45 L. T. N. S.	589 151 a
v. Gillmore, 3 Taunt.	226 339	Seeger v. Duthie, 8 C. B. N. S.	45
v. Harmon, 109 Mass.	237 427		559, 1029
v. Littledale, 8 E. & B.	815	Seeley v. Price, 14 Mich.	541 103
	189, 194	Seely v. Beck, 42 Mo.	143 349
v. Liverpool, 3 De G. & J.		Segars v. Segars, 71 Me.	530
334	594, 649		506, 507, 584
v. Lloyd, 9 Pet.	418 461, 467	Seiber v. Price, 26 Mich.	518 144, 150
v. Pilkington, 2 B. & S.	11 25 a	Seidenbender v. Charles, 4 S. & R.	
v. R. R., L. R. 1 C. P.	596 974	151	360, 363, 365
v. Ray, 18 Pick.	360	Seigel v. Eisen, 41 Cal.	109 309
	924, 927, 934	Seiple v. Irwin, 30 Penn. St.	513 945
v. Scott, 17 Md.	78 1022	Selby v. Eden, 3 Bing.	611 990
v. Shufeldt, 5 Paige,	43 265	Selden v. Myers, 20 How.	506
v. Tyler, 2 Bro. C. C.	431; 2		159, 161
Wh. & T. L. C. Eq. 4th		v. Preston, 11 Bush,	191 310
Am. ed. 429	396	Selleck v. Griswold, 49 Wis.	39 1016
v. Umbarger, 41 Cal.	410 161	v. Turnpike Co., 13 Conn.	
v. Webster, 50 Wis.	53 208, 282	453	924
Scouton v. Eislord, 7 Johns.	36 513	Sellen v. Norman, 4 C. & P.	80 938
Scoville v. Thayer, S. C. U. S.		Sellers v. Dugan, 18 Ohio,	489 382
1882; 4 Mor. Trans.	179 135	Sellin v. Price, L. R. 2 Ex.	189
Scranton v. Clark, 39 N. Y.	220 230		687, 696
v. Stewart, 52 Ind.	68 78	Sells v. Sells, 1 Dr. & S.	42 207
v. Trading Co., 37 Conn.		Selma v. Mullen, 46 Ala.	411 128
130	189, 610	Selway v. Fogg, 5 M. & W.	83
Screven Hose Co. v. Philpot, 53			288, 290, 604
Ga. 625	139	Semenza v. Brinsley, 18 C. B. N.	
Scrivendr v. Scrivenor, 7 B. Mon.		S. 467	1023
374	376	Semmes v. Ins. Co., 13 Wall.	158
Scudder v. Bank, 91 U. S.	406 463		319, 477, 616
Scully v. Kirkpatrick, 79 Penn.		Sencerbox v. McGrade, 6 Minn.	
St. 324	311, 321, 323, 329	484	134
Seaborne v. Maddy, 9 C. & P.	497 512	Sennett v. Johnson, 9 Barr,	335 1017

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Sentance v. Poole, 3 C. & P. 1		Sharp v. Conkling, 16 Vt. 355	
	98, 104, 108		815, 817
Senter v. Bowman, 5 Heisk. 14	463	v. Cropsey, 11 Barb. 224	719
Sergeson v. Sealey, 2 Atk. 412	123	v. Long, 28 Penn. St. 433	443
Servante v. James, 10 B. & C. 410	816	v. Mayor, 40 Barb. 256	241
Servis v. Cooper, 4 Vroom, 68	243	v. Taylor, 2 Phill. 801	
Serviss v. Stockstill, 30 Oh. St.			346, 349, 455
418	893	v. Teese, 4 Halst. 352	525
Seton v. Slade, 7 Ves. 265	203, 888	Sharpley v. R. R., L. R. 2 Ch. D.	
Settembre v. Putnam, 30 Cal. 490	815	663	288
Severance v. Kimball, 8 N. H.		Sharts v. Awalt, 73 Ind. 304	842
386	150	Shattock v. Shattock, L. R. 2 Eq.	
Sewall v. Henry, 9 Ala. 24	665	182	77
v. Sparrow, 16 Mass. 24	1033	Shattuck v. Gay, 45 Vt. 87	208
Sewell v. Ins. Co., 4 Taunt. 856	346	v. Green, 104 Mass. 42	
Sexton v. Wheaton, 8 Wheat.			230, 746
229; 1 Am. Lead. Cas. 18	377	Shaw, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 2 Q. B. D.	
Seylor v. Carson, 69 Penn. St. 81		463	704
	169, 283, 285	v. Badger, 12 S. & R. 275	
Seymour v. Bailey, 66 Ill. 288			712, 899, 1013
	476, 478	v. Ball, 55 Iowa, 55	159
v. Darrow, 31 Vt. 122	956	v. Barnhart, 17 Ind. 183	730
v. Delancy, 3 Cowen,		v. Berry, 35 Me. 279	947
445; rev'g 6 Johns.		v. Boyd, 5 S. & R. 309	47, 48
Ch. 222	119, 120, 121,	v. Burney, Sup. Ct. N. C.	
	166, 495, 518	1882; 14 Rep. 182	513
v. Marlboro, 40 Vt. 171	757	v. Coffin, 58 Me. 254	47, 53
v. Marvin, 11 Barb. 80	932	v. Gardner, 30 Iowa, 111	450
v. Minturn, 17 Johns.		v. Gookin, 7 N. H. 16	1026
169	833, 935, 997.	v. Hayward, 7 Cush. 170	
v. Prescott, 69 Me. 376			677, 679
	148, 151 a	v. Hurd, 3 Bibb, 371	603
v. Sexton, 10 Watts,		v. Loud, 12 Mass. 447	761, 765
255	931	v. M'Combs, 2 Bay, 232	385
v. Van Slyck, 8 Wend.		v. McGregory, 105 Mass. 96	862
403	932, 934	v. Picton, 4 B. & C. 715; 7	
Shackell v. Rosier, 2 Bing. N. C.		D. & R. 201	924, 932
634	339, 370, 511	v. Pratt, 22 Pick. 305	
Shacklett v. Polk, 51 Miss. 378	473		831, 1032
Shadwell v. Shadwell, 9 C. B. N.		v. R. R., 101 U. S. 557	793
S. 159	501, 537	v. Reed, 30 Me. 105	415, 483
Shaeffer v. Shaeffer, 54 Md. 679	709	v. Spooner, 9 N. H. 197	483
v. Sleade, 7 Blackf. 178		v. Stine, 8 Bosw. 157	242 a
	254, 259, 264	v. Thackray, 3 Sm. & G.	
Shafer v. Mining Co., 4 Cal. 294	633	537	119
Shaffer v. McKanna, 24 Kan. 22		v. Thompson, 16 Pick. 198	101
	852, 853	v. Thompson, 105 Mass.	
Shakespeare v. Markham, 72 N.		345	340
Y. 400	103	v. Turnpike Co., 2 P. &	
Shamburg v. Ruggles, 83 Penn.		W. 454	888
St. 148	863	v. Woodcock, 7 B. & C. 73	
Shardlow v. Cotterell, L. R. 20			149, 737
Ch. D. 90; rev'g, 18 Ch. D. 280		Shawmut Bk. v. Boston, 118	
	3, 661	Mass. 125	318
Sharington v. Strotton, Plowd.		Shawmut Ins. Co. v. Stevens,-9	
298	495	Allen, 332	256
Sharman v. Brandt, L. R. 6 Q. B.		Shay v. Pettes, 35 Ill. 360	207
720	805	Shealey v. Toole, 56 Ga. 210	512
Sharon v. Gager, 46 Conn. 189		Shear v. Mallory, 13 Johns. 496	784
	151 a, 483	Shearer v. Jewett, 14 Pick. 232	622

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Shears v. Jacob, L. R. 1 C. P.		Shewalter v. Ford, 34 Miss. 417	224
513	135, 138	Shewell v. Knox, 1 Dev. L. 404	570
Shed v. Pierce, 17 Mass. 623	831, 1033	Shewmake v. Williams, 54 Ga. 206	291
Sheedy v. Roach, 124 Mass. 472	496	Shickle v. Chouteau, 10 Mo. Ap.	
Sheets v. Selden, 2 Wall. 177	637	241	902
Sheffer v. Montgomery, 65 Penn.		Shields v. Lozear, 34 N. J. L. 496	972
St. 329	730	v. Pettee, 2 Sandf. 262	899
Sheffield v. Andress, 56 Ind. 157	128	Shillibeer v. Glyn, 2 M. & W. 143	520
Sheffield Nickel Co. v. Unwin, L.		Shinn v. Bodine, 60 Penn. St. 182	
R. 2 Q. B. D. 214	286, 290		552, 580
Shelburne v. Inchiquin, 1 Bro.		Ship Potomac, in re, 2 Black, 581	815
Ch. 338	208	Shipman v. Cook, 1 C. E. Green,	
Sheldon v. Capron, 3 R. I. 171	186	251	955
v. Kendall, 7 Cush. 217		v. Horton, 17 Conn. 481	
	1012, 1025		34, 56
v. Pendleton, 18 Conn.		v. Seymour, 40 Mich.	
417	64, 84, 92	274	258
Shelly v. Nash, 3 Mad. 232	169	Shippey v. Eastwood, 9 Ala. 198	389
Shelton's case, Cro. Eliz. 7	677	v. Henderson, 14 Johns.	
Shenk v. Mingle, 13 S. & R. 29		178	513
	373, 486, 515	Shipsey v. Bowery Bk., 59 N. Y.	
v. Phelps, 6 Ill. App. 612	151 a	485	929
Shepard v. Palmer, 6 Conn. 95	723	Shipton v. Casson, 5 B. & C. 378	712
v. Rhodes, 7 R. I. 470		Shirley v. Sankey, 2 Bos. & P.	
	513, 518	130	449
v. Ward, 8 Wend. 542	946	Shirley v. Stratton, 1 Bro. C. C.	
Shephard v. Watrous, 3 Caines,		440	249
166	148, 150, 152	Shirreff v. Wilks, 1 East, 48	834
Shepherd, in re, L. R. 10 Ch. D.		Shirts v. Overjohn, 60 Mo. 305	264
667	484	Shisler v. Vandike, 92 Penn. St.	
v. Bevin, 9 Gill, 32	166	447	232 a, 283, 288, 483
v. Harrison, L. R. 4 Q.		Shiver v. Johnston, 62 Ala. 37	976
B. 196; 5 H. L. 116	878	Shoemaker v. Bank, 59 Penn. St.	
v. Kain, 5 B. & Ald. 240		79	962
	227, 229, 248, 560	Shonk v. Brown, 61 Penn. St. 320	77
v. Naylor, 5 Gray, 591	793	Shook v. People, 39 Ill. 443	321
v. Pressey, 32 N. H. 49	877	Shore v. Wilson, 9 C. & F. 355	
v. Pybus, 3 M. & G. 868	904	204, 653, 654, 655, 658	
v. R. R., L. R. 3 Ex.		Short v. Battle, 52 Ala. 456	77
189	871	v. New Orleans, 4 La. An.	
v. Shepherd, 1 Md. Ch.		281	855
244	166, 494	v. Simpson, L. R. 1 C. P.	
Shepler v. Scott, 85 Penn. St. 329	856	248	793
Sheppard v. Oxenford, 1 K. & J.		v. Stevenson, 63 Penn. St.	
491	357, 726	95	282
Sherburne v. Goodwin, 44 N. H.		v. Stone, 8 Q. B. 358	606
271	1037	v. Woodward, 13 Gray, 86	647
Sheridan v. Carpenter, 61 Me. 83	810 a	Shotwell v. Murray, 1 Johns. Ch.	
v. Smith, 2 Hill, N. J.		512	198, 533
538	981	Shoup v. Shoup, 15 Penn. St. 361	1029
Sherk v. Endress, 3 W. & S. 255	235	Shower v. Pilck, 4 Ex. 478	496
Sherley v. Riggs, 11 Humph. 53		Shreve v. Joyce, 7 Vroom, 44	947
	421, 422	Shrewsbury v. Buckleys, 4 Bibb,	
Sherman v. Roberts, 1 Grant, 261	382	260	619
v. Trans. Co., 31 Vt.		Shrewsbury, etc. R. R. v. R. R.,	
162	230	20 L. J. Ch. 90; 17 Q. B. 652;	
v. Wright, 49 N. Y. 227	495	2 MacN. & G. 324; 4 De G. M.	
Sherrington v. Jermyn, 3 C. & P.		& G. 115; 6 H. L. C. 113	135, 442 a
374	700	Shubrick v. Salmond, 3 Burr.	
Sherwood v. Salmon, 2 Day, 128	245	1637	311

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Shuey v. U. S., 92 U. S. 73	24, 25	Simpson v. Simpson, 4 Dana, 140	90, 395
Shuman v. Shuman, 27 Penn. St.		v. Stackhouse, 9 Barr,	698
90	383	186	
Shupe v. Galbreath, 32 Penn. St.		v. Thomson, L. R. 3 Ap.	770
10	532	Ca. 279	832
Sibley v. Fisher, 7 A. & E. 444	698	v. Vaughan, 2 Atk. 31	137
v. McAllaster, 8 N. H. 389	765	v. Westminster Hotel	
Sibree v. Tripp, 15 M. & W. 23		Co., 8 H. L. Cas. 712	406
504, 935, 957, 997, 1001, 1003		v. Yeend, L. R. 4 Q. B.	
Sicklemore v. Thistleton, 6 M. &		626	
S. 9	570 a, 662	Simpson College v. Bryan, 50	
Sidwell v. Evans, 1 Pen. & W.		Iowa, 293	505, 528
383	1035	Sims v. Bond, 5 B. & Ad. 389	794
Sieveking v. Litzler, 31 Ind. 13	259	v. Hutchins, 8 Sm. & M. 328	742
Sievers v. Boswell, 3 Man. & Gr.		v. McLure, 8 Rich. Eq. 286	106
524	353	v. Sims, 2 Ala. 117	494, 496
Sigerson v. Mathews, 20 How. U.		v. Tyre, 3 Brev. 249	814
S. 496	513	Simson v. Cooke, 1 Bing. 452	933
Siggers v. Lewis, 1 C. M. & R. 370	980	v. Ingham, 2 B. & C. 65 ;	
Sikes v. Johnson, 16 Mass. 389	53	3 D. & R. 249	862, 923, 924, 932
Sill v. Worswick, 1 H. Bl. 665	845	Sinard v. Patterson, 3 Blackf. 353	999
Silliman v. U. S. 101 U. S. 465		Sinclair v. Baggaley, 4 M. & W.	
	149, 150, 152	312	893, 964
Sills v. Laing, 4 Camp. 81	763	v. Healy, 40 Penn. St.	
Silver Lake Bank v. North, 4		417	291
Johns. Ch. 370	142	Singer v. McCormick, 4 W. & S.	
Silverman v. Chase, 90 Ill. 37	862	265	718
Simar v. Canaday, 53 N. Y. 298	260	Singer Man.Co. v. Littler, 56 Iowa,	
Simeon v. Watson, 46 L. J. C. P.		601; 12 Rep.	
679	321, 323	777	570 a
Simmons v. Clark, 56 Ill. 96	999	v. Rawson, 50	
v. Hamilton, 56 Cal. 493	999	Iowa, 634	151 a
v. Heseltine, 5 C. B. N.		Singleton v. Barrett, 2 C. & J.	
S. 554	743	368	776
v. Rudall, 1 Sim. N. S.		Sinnott v. Mullin, 82 Penn. St.	
115	698	333	712, 899
v. Swift, 5 B. & C. 855	317	Siordet v. Hall, 4 Bing. 607 ; 1 M.	
v. Williams, 27 Ala. 507	1013	& P. 561	310
v. Wilmott, 3 Esp. 91	974	Sison v. Kidman, 4 Scott, N. R.	
Simms v. Clark, 11 Ill. 137	744, 960	429	765
v. Norris, 5 Ala. 42	70	Skaife v. Jackson, 3 B. & C. 421	
Simond v. Braddon, 2 C. B. N. S.		821, 940	
324	563	Skapholme v. Hart, Finch, 477 ;	
Simons v. Oil Co., 61 Penn. St.		1 Eq. Cas. Ab. 86, Pl. 1	427
202	282	Skeate v. Beale, 11 A. & E. 983	
Simonton's Est., 4 Watts, 180	679	149, 517	
Simonton v. Clark, 65 N. C. 525	513	Skidmore v. Bradford, L. R. 8 Eq.	
Simpler v. Lord, 28 Ga. 52	161	134	536
Simpson v. Crippin, L. R. 8 Q. B.		v. Eikenberry, 53 Iowa,	
14	580	621	558
v. Davis, 119 Mass. 269	698	v. Romaine, 2 Bradf.	
v. Eggington, 10 Ex. 845		(N. Y.) 122	101
	942, 1008	Skilbeck v. Garbett, 7 Q. B. 846	962
v. Garland, 72 Me. 40	810 a	v. Hilton, L. R. 2 Eq.	
v. Lamb, 7 E. & B. 84	426	587	1035
v. Margitson, 11 Q. B. 23		Skilling v. Bollman, 73 Mo. 665	878
	631, 896	Skinner v. Brigham, 126 Mass.	
v. Nicholls, 3 M. & W.		132	282
240; 5 M. & W. 702			
382, 384, 389			

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION		
Skinner v. Flint, 105 Mass.	528	239	Smith v. Babcock, 2 Wood & M.		
v. Henderson, 10 Mo.			246	214	
205	354		v. Baker, L. R. 8 C. P.	350	735
v. Maxwell, 66 N. C.	45		v. Baker, 40 L. T. N. S.		
	33, 38, 45		261	912	
v. Stocks, 4 B. & Ald.			v. Bank, 1 Dow.	272	254
437	818		v. Bank, 32 Vt.	341	679
Skipwith v. Strother, 3 Rand (Va.)			v. Bank, 99 Mass.	605	320
214	454		v. Bank, 9 Neb.	31	483
Skottowe v. Williams, 3 De G. F.			v. Bartholomew, 1 Met.	276	
& J. 535	288			504, 998, 999	
Skyring v. Greenwood, 4 B. & C.			v. Bean, 15 N. H.	577	
281	740			382, 383, 384	
Slack v. Brown, 13 Wend.	390	973	v. Beatty, 2 Ired. Eq.	456	
Slater v. Magraw, 12 G. & J.	265	828		158, 252	
v. Maxwell, 6 Wall.	268	516	v. Berry, 18 Me.	122	837
Slator v. Brady, 14 Ir. C. L.	61	61	v. Bettger, 68 Ind.	254	956
Slaughter v. Cunningham, 24 Ala.			v. Bickmore, 4 Taunt.	474	354
260	31		v. Black, 9 S. & R.	142	830
v. Gerson, 13 Wall.	379		v. Bouvier, 70 Penn. St.		
	244, 245, 246,	749	325	453	
Slaymaker v. Irwin, 4 Whart.	369	4	v. Briggs, 3 Denio,	73	594, 729
Sledge v. Scott, 56 Ala.	202	214	v. Brittenham, 98 Ill.	188	
Sleigh v. Sleigh, 5 Exch.	514			243, 285	
	756, 761, 763		v. Bromley, Doug.	696	
Slim v. Croucher, 2 Giff.	37; 1			149, 341, 345, 353,	737
De G. F. & J. 518	241, 257		v. Brotherline, 62 Penn.		
Slingerland v. Morse, 8 Johns.			St. 461	161	
474	869, 993		v. Brown, 3 Hawks,	580	
Slingluff v. Eckel, 24 Penn. St.				504, 935, 996, 1002	
472	443		v. Buchanan, 1 East,	6	843
Slingsby's case, 5 Coke,	18 b	817	v. Busby, 15 Mo.	387	230
Sloan v. Hayden, 110 Mass.	141	51	v. Chance, 2 B. & Ald.	753	708
Slocum v. Marshall, 2 Wash. C.			v. Cherrill, L. R. 4 Eq.	390	377
C. 397	161		v. Clarke, 12 Ves.	477	260, 267
Slothower v. Gordon, 23 Md.	1	902	v. Cleveland, 17 Wis.	556	1062
Small v. Attwood, 1 Young,	407 ;		v. Com., 14 S. & R.	69	430
6 Cl. & F. 232	242		v. Countryman, 30 N. Y.		
v. Mining Co., 99 Mass.			655	243, 251	
277	953		v. Crooker, 5 Mass.	538	
v. Quincy, 4 Greenl.	497	620		695, 696, 697	
v. R. R., 55 Iowa,	582	421, 429	v. Cuff, 6 M. & S.	160	353, 738
Smalley v. Greene, 52 Iowa,	241		v. Dann, 6 Hill,	543	570
	431, 433		v. Emerson, 126 Mass.	169	
v. Hale, 37 Mo.	102	239		661, 662	
Smart v. Cason, 50 Ill.	195	340, 341	v. Evans, 6 Binn.	102	190
v. Chell, 7 Dowl.	781		v. Evans, 5 Humph.	70	
	498, 512, 784			47, 48, 50	
v. Hyde, 8 M. & W.	723	610	v. Faulkner, 12 Gray,	251	647
v. White, 73 Me.	332	353, 730	v. Fairbanks, 7 Fost.	521	230
Smidt v. Tiden, L. R. 9 Q. B.	446	178	v. Ferrand, 7 B. & C.	19	955
Smillie v. Titus, 32 N. J. Eq.	51	151	v. Flour Mills, 6 Cal.	1	138
Smith's case, L. R. 2 Ch.	604		v. Foster, 41 N. H.	215	382
	237, 245, 264		v. Foster, 18 Vt.	182	584
Smith v. Algar, 1 B. & Ad.	603	532	v. Franklin, 1 Mass.	480	820
v. Applegate, 3 Zab.	352	402	v. Frederick, 1 Russ.	174	655
v. Arnold, 106 Mass.	269		v. Galloway, 5 B. & Ad.	43	
	360, 365			633, 668	
v. Atkins, 18 Vt.	461	298	v. Gas Co., 1 A. & E.	526 ;	
v. Atwood, 14 Ga.	402	150	3 N. & M.	771	128

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Smith v. Gayle, 58 Ala. 600	1032	Smith v. Monteith, 13 M. & W.	
v. Godfrey, 28 N. H. 379		427	144, 148
	343, 445	v. Morse, 20 La. An. 220	7, 708
v. Gowdy, 8 Allen, 566	4	v. Myers, L. R. 5 Q. B.	
v. Greenlee, 2 Dev. 126	443	429 ; 7 Q. B. 139	563
v. Hicks, 1 Wend. 202	816, 835	v. Newland, 9 Hun, 553	576
v. Hill, 8 Gray, 572	1026	v. Page, 15 M. & W. 683	504
v. Hodson, 2 Smith's L. C.		v. Peters, L. R. 20 Eq. 511	593
7th Am. ed. 129	1026	v. Plank Road Co., 30 Ala.	
v. Holyoke, 112 Mass. 517	285	650	528, 595
v. Hudson, 6 B. & S. 431	877	v. Portage Co., 9 Ohio, 25	502
v. Hughes, L. R. 6 Q. B.		v. Porter, 10 Gray, 66	893
597 4, 189, 242, 250, 251, 252		v. Printup, 59 Ga. 610	1029
v. Iliffe, L. R. 20 Eq. 666	207	v. Proprietors, 8 Pick. 178	130
v. Ins. Co., 7 Met 448	569	v. R. R., 6 Allen, 262	581
v. Ins. Co., 25 Barb. 497	338 a	v. R. R., 120 Mass. 490	368
v. Ins. Co., 49 N. Y. 211		v. Readfield, 27 Me. 145	150
	249, 256	v. Richards, 13 Pet. 26	
v. Ins. Co., S. C. Penn.		214, 232, 241, 242, 282	
1882 ; 13 Rep. 606	323	v. Richards, 29 Conn. 232	373
v. Johnson, 5 Harring. 40	1021	v. Roche, 6 C. B. N. S. 223	
v. Jones, 11 L. J. C. P. 99	722		373, 525
v. Jones, 15 Johns. 229		v. Rogers, 17 Johns. 340	949
	779, 936, 1007	v. Rowley, 66 Barb. 502	151 a
v. Kay, 7 H. L. C. 750		v. Sanborn, 11 Johns. 59	620
	161, 162, 242, 242 a	v. Sayward, 5 Greenl. 504	768
v. Knowles, 2 Grant, 413	395	v. Schibel, 19 Mo. 140	836
v. Lewis, 24 Conn. 624 ;		v. Sheeley, 12 Wall. 358	142
26 Conn. 110		v. Smith, 7 C. & P. 401	496
	558, 581, 602, 606	v. Smith, 13 C. B. N. S.	
v. Lewis, 40 Ind. 98		418	534
	580, 748, 898	v. Smith, 30 Vt. 139	285
v. Lewis, 3 B. Monr. 229	785	v. Smith, 25 Wend. 405 ;	
v. Lindo, 4 C. B. N. S.		2 Hill, 351	873, 990, 991
395 ; 5 C. B. N. S. 587		v. Smith, 30 N. J. Eq. 564	719
	364, 709	v. Smith, 21 Penn. St. 367	
v. Livingston, 41 Mass.			258, 282
342	795	v. Smith, 36 Ga. 164	533
v. Loomis, 7 Conn. 110		v. Sparrow, 4 Bing. 84	385
	871, 990, 993	v. Speer, N. J. Ct. App.	
v. Love, 64 N. C. 439	589	1881 ; 14 Cent. L. J. 16	35
v. Low, 1 Atkins, 489	58	v. Spooner, 3 Pick. 229	124
v. Loyd, 11 Leigh, 512		v. State, 6 Gill, 425	374
	932, 933, 934	v. Stone, 4 Gill & J. 310	821
v. McDougal, 2 Cal. 586	198	v. Tallcott, 21 Wend. 202	815
v. Manners, 5 C. B. N. S.		v. Townsend, 109 Mass.	
632	980	500	161, 378
v. Marrable, 11 M. & W.		v. Tracy, 36 N. Y. 79	709
5	221	v. Trowsdale, 3 E. & B. 83	996
v. Mawwood, 14 M. & W.		v. U. S., 2 Wall. 219	695
452	364	v. Ware, 13 Johns. 257	512
v. Mayberry, 13 Nev. 427	785	v. Weaver, 90 Ill. 392	15
v. Mayo, 9 Mass. 62	57, 63	v. Webster, L. R. 3 Ch. D.	
v. Meeting House, 8 Pick.		49	4, 5
178	714	v. Webster, 2 Watts, 478	285
v. Mercer, L. R. 3 Ex. 51		v. Weed, 20 Wend. 184	505
	853, 958	v. Wetherell, 4 Ill. App.	
v. Miller, 43 N. Y. 171		655	15
	953, 958	v. Wheatcroft, L. R. 9 Ch.	
v. Mitchell, 6 Ga. 458	236, 241	D. 223	183, 854

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Smith v. Wheeler, 7 Oregon, 49	603	Sonneborn v. Lavarello, 2 Hun,	416
v. Whildin, 10 Barr, 39		201	
	413, 502	Sooy v. State, 39 N. J. L. 135	570 a
v. Whitaker, 23 Ill. 367	654	Soper v. Stevens, 14 Me. 133	282
v. White, L. R. 1 Eq. 626	374	Sorrell v. Craig, 8 Ala. 566	990
v. Wigley, 3 Moore & S.		Sorsbie v. Park, 12 M. & W. 146	
174	924		814, 826
v. Wilcox, 19 Barb. 581	387	Sortwell v. Hughes, 1 Curtis, 244	
v. Wilson, 3 B. & Ad. 728	635		343, 445
Smither v. Calvert, 44 Ind. 242		Soule v. Bonney, 37 Me. 128	
	215, 245, 259		144, 148, 150
Smoot's case, 15 Wall. 36		South Boston Iron Works v. Loco-	
	559, 579, 603	motive Works, 51 Me. 585	845
Smoot v. Rea, 19 Md. 398	495	South of Ireland Colliery Co. v.	
Small v. Jones, 1 Watts & S. 128 ;		Waddle, L. R. 3 C. P. 463	128
6 Watts & S. 122	169, 443, 444	South Eastern R. R. v. R., 17 Q.	
Smuller v. Union Canal Co., 37		B. 485	620
Penn. St. 68	923, 927, 929	South Ottawa v. Perkins, 94 U. S.	
Snelgrove v. Hunt, 2 Stark, 374	822	260	796
Snell v. Cheney, 88 Ill. 258	598	South, etc. R. R. v. Alabama, 101	
v. Dwight, 120 Mass. 9	349	U. S. 882	1067
v. Ins. Co., 98 U. S. 85	198, 199	v. Chappell, 61	
v. Ives, 85 Ill. 279		Ala. 527	131
	785, 786, 786 a, 853	South Wales R. R. v. Redmond,	
v. Moses, 1 John. 96	239	10 C. B. N. S. 675	140
Snelling v. Hall, 107 Mass. 134		Southall v. Ass. Co., L. R. 11 Eq.	
	709, 910	65	135
v. Thomas, L. R. 17 Eq.		Southampton v. Brown, 6 B. & C.	
303	661	718	810
Snevily v. Reed, 9 Watts, 396		Southard v. Bonner, 72 N. Y. 424	376
	512, 513, 1032	v. R. R., 2 Dutch. 13	414
Snow v. Copley, 3 La. An. 610	35	v. Rexford, 6 Cow. 254	2
v. Grace, 29 Ark. 131	533	v. Sturtevant. 109 Mass.	
v. Miles, 3 Cliff. 608	4	390	811
v. Orleans, 126 Mass. 453	677	Southern Ex. Co. v. Craft, 49 Miss.	
v. Perry, 9 Pick. 539	985	480	319
v. Prescott, 12 N. H. 535		v. Duffey, 48 Ga.	
	558, 740	358	415
v. Ware, 13 Met. 42	714, 898	South. Ins. Co. v. Wilkinson, 53	
Snowdon v. Davis, 1 Taunt. 359	740	Ga. 535	239
Snowman v. Harford, 55 Me. 197		v. Yates, 28 Grat.	
	887, 888	585	196
Snyder v. Braden, 58 Ind. 143	151	Southmayd v. Ins. Co., 47 Wis.	
v. Ives, 42 Iowa, 157	196	517	717
v. Willey, 33 Mich. 483	483	Southwark Bank v. Gross, 35 Penn.	
Society for Savings v. New Lon-		St. 80	700
don, 29 Conn. 174	796	Southwell v. Bowditch, L. R. 1 C.	
Solinger v. Earle, 82 N. Y. 393	380	P. D. 374	657
Solliday v. Bissey, 12 Penn. St.		Southwick v. Bank, 84 N. Y. 420	
347	1021	194, 257, 576, 752	
Solly v. Forbes, 2 Br. & B. 38		Southworth v. Smith, 7 Cush. 391	
	684, 831, 1037	285, 982, 983, 990	
Solomon v. Evans, 3 McC. 274	678	Souverbye v. Arden, 1 John. Ch.	
v. Kimmel, 5 Binn. 232	495	240	677
v. Webster, 4 Col. 353	4	Spaids v. Barrett, 57 Ill. 289	149
Solomons v. Ross, 1 H. Bl. 131 n	845	Spain v. Arnott, 2 Stark, 227	717
Somers v. Pumphrey, 24 Ind. 231		v. Hamilton, 1 Wall. 604	
	45, 98, 107		138, 845
Somes v. Skinner, 16 Mass. 348		Spalding v. Bank, 9 Barr, 28	133
	104, 110, 161, 245	v. Bank, 12 Ohio, 544	340

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Spalding v. Preston, 21 Vt. 9	454	Spring v. Hulett, 104 Mass. 591	719
v. Rosa, 71 N. Y. 40		v. Ins. Co., 8 Wheat. 268	840
300, 311, 323		Spring Co. v. Knowlton, 103 U. S.	
v. Vandercook, 2 Wend.		49	353, 354
431	975	Springer v. Springer, 43 Penn.	
Spann v. Baltzell, 1 Fla. 301	1002	St. 518	756
Spargo's case. L. R. 8 Ch. 407	964	Springfield Bk. v. Merrick, 14	
Sparkman v. Place, 5 Ben. 184	377	Mass. 322	360
Sparling v. Marks, 86 Ill. 125	219	Springhead Spinning Co. v. Riley,	
Sparrow v. Kingman, 1 Comst.		L. R. 6 Eq. 551	440
242	89	Springport v. Bank, 84 N. Y. 403	971
Spartali v. Benecke, 10 C. B. 212	882	Sprott v. Ross, 16 Ct. of Sess.	
Spaulding v. Crawford, 27 Tex.		1145	250, 256
155	146	v. U. S., 20 Wall. 459	341
v. Lowell, 23 Pick. 71	137	Sprowl v. Lawrence, 33 Ala. 674	390
Spears v. Snell, 74 N. C. 210	180	Spruneberger v. Deutter, 4 Watts,	
Specht v. Com., 8 Barr, 312	382	126	999
Speck v. Dausman, 7 Mo. Ap. 165	394	Sprye v. Porter, 7 E. & B. 58	421, 423
Speed v. May, 17 Penn. St. 91	843	Spurgeon v. McElwain, 6 Ohio,	
Speers v. Sewell, 4 Bush, 239	110	442	340
v. Sterrett, 29 Penn. St.		Spurr v. Benedict, 99 Mass. 463	
192	1029	186, 207, 216	
Speise v. McCoy, 6 W. & S. 485	751	v. Cass, L. R. 5 Q. B.	
Spence v. Baldwin, 59 How. Pr.		656	803
875	232 a	Spyve v. Topham, 3 East, 115	210
v. Chodwick, 10 Q. B. 517	306	Squire v. R. R., 98 Mass. 239	572
v. Healey, 8 Exch. 668		Staats v. Ten Eyck, 3 Caines, 111	899
996, 999		Stace & Worth's case, L. R. 4 Ch.	
Spencer's App., 80 Penn. St. 317	161	682	135
Spencer v. Babcock, 22 Barb. 326	1025	Stackpole v. Arnold, 11 Mass. 27	
v. Carr, 45 N. Y. 406		684, 810 a	
33, 38, 45, 63		v. Symonds, 3 Fost. 229	382
v. Dearth, 43 Vt. 98	694	Stackwood v. Dunn, 3 Q. B. 822	1021
v. Field, 10 Wend. 87		Stacy v. Graham, 14 N. Y. 492	752
788, 810 a		v. Kemp, 97 Mass. 166	382, 938
v. Harding, L. R. 5 C. P.		v. Ross, 27 Tex. 3	283
561	24, 26, 801	Stadhard v. Lee, 3 B. & S. 364	591
v. Millisack, 52 Iowa, 31	657	Stadt v. Lill, 9 East, 348	536
v. Parry, 3 Ad. & El. 331	761	Stafford v. Bacon, 25 Wend. 384;	
Spicer v. Cooper, 1 Q. B. 424		1 Hill, 532; 2 Hill, 353	
628, 637		512, 513	
v. Earl, 41 Mich. 191	58	v. Clark, 2 Bing. 377	975
Spickler v. Marsh, 36 Md. 222	589	v. Roof, 9 Cow. 626	34, 56
Spiegelberg v. Mink, 1 New Mex.		Stagg v. Ins. Co., 10 Wall. 589	631
308	719	Staines v. Shore, 16 Penn. St. 200	267
Spiller v. Paris Rink, L. R. 7 Ch.		Stamford Bank v. Benedict, 15	
D. 368	811	Conn. 437	128, 932
Spires v. Hamot, 8 W. & S. 17	934	Stamp v. Cass Co., 11 N. W. Rep.	
Spittle v. Lavender, 5 Moore, 270	729	183	24
Spivey v. Wilson, 31 La. An. 653	377	Stamper v. Temple, 6 Humph. 113	24
Splidt v. Heath, 2 Camp. 57	306	Staniland v. Hopkins, 9 M. & W.	
Spooner v. Brewster, 2 C. & P. 34	76	178	662
v. Payne, 4 Ex. 138	412	Stanley's Appeal, 8 Barr, 431	161
Sporrer v. Eifler, 1 Heisk. 633	469	Stanley v. Gaylord, 1 Cush. 536	736
Sprague v. Birdsall, 2 Cow. 419	752	v. Ins. Co., L. R. 3 Ex. 71	632
v. Gillett, 9 Met. (Mass.)		v. Jones, 7 Bing. 369	
91	1038	421, 424, 427	
v. Hazenwinkle, 53 Ill.		v. Stanley, L. R. 7 C. D.	
419	933	589	77
Sprigg v. Bank, 14 Pet. 201	655	v. Stanley, 26 Me. 191	1065

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Stanley Rule Co. v. Bailey, 45		State v. Greer, 9 Mo. Ap. 219	1065
Conn. 464	752, 753	v. Gurney, 37 Me. 149	382
Stanly v. Nelson, 28 Ala. 514	365	v. Harney, 57 Miss. 863	148
Stanton v. Allen, 5 Den. 434		v. Hartford, etc. R. R., 29	
	442, 442 a	Conn. 538	430, 442 a
v. Embrey, 93 U. S. 548	427	v. Hastings, 24 Minn. 78	631
v. Haskin, 1 MacAr. 558		v. Hoboken, 43 N. J. L. 96	1063
	426, 427	v. Holloway, 8 Blackf. 45	264
v. Kirsch, 6 Wis. 338	91	v. Horn, 70 Mo. 466	306
v. Miller, 65 Barb. 58	677	v. Lindenthall, 5 Rich. 237	292
v. Richardson, L. R. 7 C.		v. McKinstry, 50 Ind. 465	415
P. 421	607	v. Maxwell, 47 Iowa, 454	185
v. Willson, 3 Day, 37	69	v. Merrihew, 47 Iowa, 112	321
Stapilton v. Stapilton, 2 Wh. &		v. Merritt, 70 Mo. 275	239
T. L. C. Eq., 5th Eng. ed. 836		v. Mills, 17 Me. 211	242 a, 259
	90, 395	v. Murphy, 6 Ala. 765	371
Staples v. Gould, 5 Sandf. 411	344	v. Nashville, 2 Tenn. Ch.	
v. Young, L. R. 2 Ex. D.		755	810
324	1016	v. New Orleans, 32 La. An.	
v. Wellington, 58 Me. 453		709	1070
	109, 110	v. Norment, 12 La. 511	321
Stapleton v. Nowell, 6 M. & W. 9	975	v. Norton, 3 Zab. 33	415
Star Glass Co. v. Morey, 108 Mass.		v. Noyes, 25 Vt. 415	415
570	7, 712, 899	v. Paup, 8 Eng. (Ark.) 129	199
Stark v. Parker, 2 Pick. 267	717	v. Plaisted, 43 N. H. 413	31
Starkey v. Gabby, 1 Cr. & Dix,		v. Potter, 30 Iowa, 587	374
248	930	v. Prather, 44 Ind. 287	257
Starkweather v. Benjamin, 32		v. Reaney, 13 Md. 230	321
Mich. 305	245	v. Reddick, 7 Kan. 143	109
v. Goodman, 48		v. Richmond, 6 Post. 232	36
Conn. 101	594	v. Savoye, 48 Iowa, 562	371
Starnes v. Erwin, 10 Ired. 226	215	v. Scott, 20 Iowa, 63	321
Starr v. Bennett, 5 Hill, 303	264	v. Shooter, 8 Rich. 72	376
v. Taylor, 4 McCord, 413	76	v. Smith, 6 Greenl. 462	400
v. Torrey, 2 Zab. 190	287	v. Sooy, 38 N. J. L. 324	148
Starrett v. Barber, 20 Me. 457	924, 932	v. Sumner, 10 Vt. 587	262
Startup v. Macdonald, 6 M. & G.		v. Story, 57 Miss. 738	1001
593	882, 884, 885, 971, 980	v. Tasker, 31 Mo. 445	233
State v. Adams, 3 Head, 259	321	v. Telephone Co., 36 Oh. St.	
v. Allen, 2 Hump. 258	321	296	431, 436
v. Ambs, 20 Mo. 214	382	v. Thatcher, 35 N. J. L. 445	242 a
v. Anderson, 30 Ark. 131	382	v. Tiernan, 39 Iowa, 474	321
v. Baird, 6 C. E. Green, 384	400	v. Timmons, 58 Ind. 98	262
v. Barker, 18 Vt. 195	382	v. Tomlin, 5 Dutcher,	
v. Bartlett, 30 Me. 132	376	13	242, 243
v. Berg, 50 Ind. 496	702	v. Tootle, 2 Harring. 541	640
v. Blauvelt, 38 N. J. L. 306	240	v. Williams, 1 Vroom, 102	374
v. Brown, 25 Iowa, 561	292	v. Wilner, 40 Wis. 304	109
v. Buchanan, 5 Har. & J. 317	376	v. Worthington, 7 Ohio, 171	620
v. Chitty, 1 Bailey, 379	421	v. Vanderbilt, 3 Dutch. 328	243
v. Church, 43 Conn. 471	243	v. Young, 76 N. C. 258	244
v. Clarke, 33 N. H. 329	458	v. Younger, 1 Dev. 357	376
v. Clarke, 3 Harring. 557	30	State Bank v. Campbell, 2 Rich.	
v. Dunlap, 24 Me. 77	242 a	Eq. 180	765
v. Estes, 46 Me. 150	261	v. Cape Fear Bank,	
v. Evers, 49 Mo. 542	257	13 Ired. 75	1063
v. Flanders, 38 N. H. 324	185	v. Fox, 3 Blatch. C.	
v. Fletcher, 5 N. H. 257	363	C. 431	138
v. Gaillard, 11 S. C. 309 ;		v. Hastings, 15 Wis.	
101 U. S. 433	1067	75	411

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
State Bank v. McCoy, 69 Penn.		Steeple v. Newton, 7 Oregon,	
St. 204	108, 118	110	714
v. Thompson, 42 N.		Steinbach v. Ins. Co., 54 N. Y.	652
H. 369	386	Steinbaker v. Wilson, 1 Leg. Gaz.	
v. Welles, 3 Pick. 394	960	76	488
State Board of Agr. v. R. R., 47		Steinfeld v. Levy, 16 Abb. Pr.	
Ind. 407	129, 136, 140	(N. S.) 26	373
State Treasurer v. Cross, 9 Vt.		Steinman v. Magnus, 11 East,	
289	528	390; 2 Camp. 124	
Statham v. Ferguson, 25 Grat. 28	161	523, 527, 935, 1001	
Staunton v. Wood, 16 Q. B. 638		Stephen's App., 87 Penn. St. 202	251
	579, 886	Stephen v. Beall, 22 Wall. 329	77
Stavers v. Curling, 3 Bing. N. C.		Stephens, <i>ex parte</i> , 11 Ves. 24	
355; 3 Scott, 740	553, 554, 597, 662		1021, 1024
Stead v. Poyer, 1 C. B. 782	1006	v. Ells, 65 Mo. 456	230
Steaines v. Wainwright, 8 Scott,		v. Graham, 7 S. & R.	
280	362	505	697, 700
Steam Nav. Co. v. Weed, 17 Barb.		v. Ins. Co., L. R. 8 C.	
378	142	P. 18	205, 206
Steam Stoker Co., <i>in re</i> , L. R. 19		v. Pell, 2 C. & M. 710	670
Eq. 416	977, 985	v. Rinehart, 72 Penn.	
Steamboat Charlotte v. Hammond,		St. 434	679
9 Mo. 59	955	v. Spiers, 25 Mo. 386	
Stearns v. Barrett, 1 Pick. 443	436		373, 486
v. Felker, 28 Wis. 594	427	v. Venables, 30 Beav.	
v. Johnson, 17 Minn. 142	533	625	842
v. Marsh, 4 Denio, 227	576	Stephenson v. Hart, 4 Bing. 476	792
Stebbins v. Eddy, 4 Mason, 414		Stepney v. Lloyd, Cro. Eliz. 647	148
	190, 259, 902	Sterling v. Rogers, 25 Wend.	
v. Leowolf, 3 Cush.		658	1040
137	637, 897	v. Sinnickson, 2 South.	
v. Sherman, 1 Sandf.		756	396
510	512, 513	Stern v. Freeman, 4 Metc. (Ky.)	
v. Smith, 4 Pick. 97	505	309	63
Stedman v. Gooch, 1 Esp. 4	956	Sternburg v. Bowman, 103 Mass.	
v. Jillson, 10 Conn. 55	1025	325	376, 380
Steel v. Dixon, L. R. 17 Ch. D.		v. Callanan, 14 Iowa,	
825; 45 L. T. N. S. 142		251	863
	765, 769	Sterry v. Clifton, 9 C. B. 110	411
v. Steel, 12 Penn. St. 64		Stetson v. Kempton, 13 Mass. 272	143
	719, 1026	Steuben Bank. Co. v. Mathewson,	
v. Western, 7 Moore, 29	818	5 Hill, 249	146
Steel Works v. Dewey, 37 Ohio		Stevens v. Bagwell, 15 Ves. 139	427
St. 242	603, 604	v. Benning, 1 K. & J. 168	180
Steele v. Branch, 40 Cal. 3	888	v. Brennan, 79 N. Y. 254	291
v. Curle, 4 Dana, 381	345	v. Briggs, 14 Vt. 44	935, 971
v. Ellmaker, 11 S. & R. 86	267	v. Coon, 1 Pinney (Wis.),	
v. Harmer, 14 M. & W.		356	301
831	138	v. Dennett, 51 N. H. 324	185
v. Lineberger, 59 Penn. St.		v. Fitch, 11 Met. 248	740
308	417	v. Lynch, 12 East, 38	57, 198
v. Mart, 4 B. & C. 272	678, 894	v. Perrier, 12 Kan. 297	444
v. Spencer, 1 Peters, 552	697	v. Smith, 21 Vt. 90	224
v. Williams, 8 Ex. 625	738	v. Tucker, 73 Ind. 73	765
v. Worthington, 2 Ohio,		v. Webb, 7 C. & P. 60	624
182	166	Stevenson v. McLean, L. R. 5 Q.	
Steelman v. Mattix, 38 N. J. L.		B. D. 346	
247	321	5, 9, 9 a, 11, 18, 27	
Steene v. Aylesworth, 18 Conn.		v. Newnham, 13 C. B.	
244	739	285	291

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Stevenson v. Payne, 109 Mass.		Stikeman v. Dawson, 1 De G. &	
378	473	S. 90	52, 54, 74
v. Robertson, 55 Iowa,		Stiles v. Easley, 51 Ill. 275	476
689	516	v. R. R., 8 Met. 44	271
v. State, 65 Ind. 409	963	v. White, 11 Met. 356	238
Stewart's Appeal, 56 Penn. St.		Stilk v. Myrick, 2 Camp. 317	503
413	135	Stilwell v. Coope, 4 Den. 225	513
78 Penn. St. 88		Stimson v. White, 20 Wis. 562	91
	376, 382	Stine v. Sherk, 1 W. & S. 195	256 a
Stewart v. Aberdeen, 4 M. & W.		Stiner v. Stiner, 58 Barb. 643	158
211	943	Stinson v. Walker, 21 Me. 211	189
v. Alliston, 1 Mer. 26	186	Stirling v. Forrester, 3 Bligh, 575	765
v. Coulter, 12 S. & R.		Stitt v. Huidekopers, 17 Wall.	
252	1021	384	10
v. Davis, 31 Ark. 518	388	v. Little, 63 N. Y. 427	214
v. Donnelly, 4 Yerg. 177		Stockbridge Iron Co. v. Hudson,	
	622, 623	Iron Co., 102 Mass. 45 ; 107	
v. Ellice, 2 Paige, 604	463	Mass. 290	199, 202, 206, 208
v. Emerson, 52 N. H. 301		Stockdale v. Dunlop, 6 M. & W.	
	258, 262, 960	224	21, 558
v. Fenner, 81 Penn. St.		v. Onwhyn, 5 B. & C.	
177	239	173	372
v. Fulton, 31 Mo. 59	330	Stocken v. Collin, 7 M. & W.	
v. Gibson, 7 Cl. & F.		515	15, 18
707	349	Stockett v. Watkins, 2 Gill & J.	
v. Hamilton College, 2		326	730
Den. 403 ; 1 N. Y. 581		Stockham v. Stockham, 32 Md.	
	506, 528	196	9, 18
v. Hubbard, 3 Jones Eq.		Stocking v. Sage, 1 Conn. 519	709
186	161	Stockley v. Stockley, 1 Ves. & B.	
v. Huntingdon Bank, 11		23	104, 198
S. & R. 267	133	Stocks v. Dobson, 4 D. M. & G. 11	845
v. Ins. Co., 9 Watts,		Stockton Iron Co., in re, L. R. 2	
126	1019	C. D. 101	549
v. Kearney, 6 Watts, 453	340	Stockton Soc. v. Hildreth, 53 Cal.	
v. Keith, 12 Penn. St.		721	601
238	285	Stockwell v. Hunter, 11 Metc. 448	318
v. Keteltas, 36 N. Y. 388		v. Silloway, 113 Mass.	
	312, 500, 606	384	377
v. Loring, 5 Allen, 306		Stoddard v. Foundry Co., 34	
	300, 323, 326, 547	Conn. 542	141
v. McGuin, 1 Cow. 99	532	v. Ham, 129 Mass. 383	
v. M'Quaide, 48 Penn.			506, 507, 784
St. 191	869	v. Harrington, 100	
v. Morrow, 1 Grant		Mass. 37	1068
(Penn.), 204	892	v. Hart, 23 N. Y. 556	199
v. Reckless, 4 Zab. 427	513	Stoddart v. Penniman, 108 Mass.	
v. Stewart, 6 Cl. & F.		366	695
911	198, 199, 533	Stodden v. Harvey, Cro. Jac. 204	882
v. Trans. Co., 17 Minn.		Stoessiger v. R. R., 3 E. & B. 549	795
372	442 a	Stokes v. Lewis, 1 T. R. 20	756
v. Walker, 14 Penn. St.		v. Salomons, 9 Hare, 75	198
293	716, 717	Stokoe v. Cowan, 29 Beav. 637	377
Stewkley v. Butler, F. Moore,		Stollenwerck v. Thacher, 115	
880	666	Mass. 224	793
Stickney v. Clement, 7 Gray,		Stone v. Clark, 1 Met. 378	206
170	1021	v. Clough, 41 N. H. 290	694
v. Jordan, 58 Me. 106	463	v. Covell, 29 Mich. 359	241
Stickter v. Guldin, 30 Penn. St.		v. Damon, 12 Mass. 488	123
114	282	v. Dennis, 3 Porter, 231	305

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Stone v. Dennison, 13 Pick. 1	64	Straton v. Rastall, 2 T. R. 366	
v. Hackett, 12 Gray, 227	494		747, 940
v. Hale, 17 Ala. 557	211	Stratton v. Allen, 16 N. J. Eq.	
v. Hooker, 9 Cow. 154	405, 486	229	128
v. Hubbard, 7 Cush. 595	634	v. Stratton, 58 N. H. 473	537
v. Locke, 46 Me. 445	340	Straus v. Ins. Co., 5 Oh. St. 59	
v. Marsh, 6 B. & C. 551	736		127, 138
v. Rogers, 2 M. & W. 443	708	Strawbridge v. Cartledge, 7 W. &	
v. Seymour, 15 Wend. 19		S. 394	495
	924, 931	Strawn v. O'Hara, 86 Ill. 53	809
v. State, 12 Mo. 400	180	v. Strawn, 50 Ill. 33	89
v. Stone, 32 Conn. 142	512	Stray v. Russell, 1 E. & E. 888	747
v. Swift, 4 Pick. 389	793, 878	Strayer v. Stone, 47 Iowa, 333	208
v. Wisconsin, 94 U. S. 181	1064	Streatfield v. Halliday, 3 T. R. 779	817
v. Wood, 7 Cow. 453	810 a	Street v. Blay, 2 B. & Ad. 456	
v. Wood, 85 Ill. 603	239		263, 282, 730
v. Wythipol, Cro. Eliz. 126	55	v. Holyoke, 105 Mass. 82	308
Stoney v. Ins. Co., 11 Paige, 635		v. Rigby, 6 Ves. 815	417
	137, 141, 465	Streeter v. Horlock, 1 Bing. 34	
Stonington v. Powers, 37 Conn.			513, 708
439	405	Strickland v. Turner, 7 Ex. 208	298
Stoolfoos v. Jenkins, 12 S. & R.		Striker v. McMichael, 1 Phila. 89	292
399	48, 52, 74	Stringham v. Ins. Co., 40 N. Y.	
Storer v. Gordon, 3 M. & S. 308		280	230
	784, 788, 810	Strohecker v. Farmer's Bk, 6	
Storm v. Smith, 43 Miss. 497	230	Barr, 41	198, 617
v. Stirling, 3 E. & B. 832		v. Hoffman, 19 Penn.	
	795, 819	St. 223	427
v. U. S., 94 U. S. 76	708	Strohn v. R. R., 23 Wis. 126	25
Storrs v. Barker, 6 Johns. Ch.		Strong v. Barnes, 11 Vt. 221	230, 665
166	198	v. Blake, 46 Barb. 227	983
Story v. Johnson, 2 Y. & C. 586	58	v. Dodds, 47 Vt. 348	877
v. Krewson, 55 Ind. 397	972	v. Foote, 42 Conn. 203	
v. Livingston, 13 Pet. 359	934		64, 69, 70
v. R. R., 24 Conn. 94	242	v. Hart, 6 B. & C. 160	957
v. Salomon, 71 N. Y. 420		v. Harvey, 3 Bing. 304	979
	453, 453 a	v. Hines, 35 Miss. 201	239
Stouffer v. Latshaw, 2 Watts, 165		v. Kennedy, 40 Mich. 327	963
	144, 148, 150	v. McConnell, 10 Vt. 231	740
Stoutenburg v. Lybrand, 13 Oh.		v. Waddell, 56 Ala. 471	89
St. 228	394, 415, 509	Stropes v. Board, 72 Ind. 42	335, 708
Stoveld v. Eade, 4 Bing. 154	924	Stroud v. Smith, 4 Houst. 448	407
Stover v. Mitchell, 45 Ill. 213	149	Stuart v. Baker, 14 Tex. 417	31
v. Wood, 11 C. E. Green,		v. Cambridge, 125 Mass.	
417	260	102	661
Stow v. Bozeman, 29 Ala. 397	209	v. R. R., 32 Grat. 146	16 b, 528
v. Russell, 36 Ill. 18	887, 888	v. Sears, 119 Mass. 143	192
v. Yarwood, 20 Ill. 497	1026	Stubbs v. Johnson, 127 Mass. 219	258
Stowe v. Sewall, 3 St. & P. 67	776	v. Lund, 7 Mass. 453	878
Stowell v. Drake, 3 Zab. 310	820	v. R. R., L. R. 2 Ex. 311	323
Stracy v. Bank, 6 Bing. 754	1000	Stuckey v. Mathes, 24 Hun, 461	113
Strain v. Wright, 7 Ga. 568		Stucley v. Baily, 1 H. & C. 405	219
	36, 37, 48, 48 a, 53	Stull v. Hurtt, 9 Gill, 446	902
Straker v. Kidd, L. R. 3 Q. B. D.		Stump v. Gaby, 2 D. M. G. 623	168
223	311	Stumpf v. Stumpf, Md. Ct. of App.	
Strang v. Holmes, 7 Cow. 224	996, 998	1879	159
Strange v. Brennan, 15 Sim. 346	427	Sturdivant v. Hull, 59 Me. 172	810 a
Strathmore v. Bowes, 2 Cox, 28;		Sturdy v. Arnaud, 3 T. R. 599	964
1 Ves. Jr. 22; 2 Brown C. C.		Sturge v. Starr, 2 My. & K. 195	247
345	266	Sturges v. Allis, 10 Wend. 354	740

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Sturges v. Bank, 11 Ohio St. 153	269	Swain v. Ettling, 32 Penn. St.	
v. Crowninshield, 4 Wheat.		486	539
122	1, 1067	v. Frazier, 35 N. J. Eq.	
v. Robbins, 7 Mass. 301	16	326; 14 Rep. 277	955
Sturgis v. Galindo, Sup. Ct. Cal.		Swaine v. Perine, 5 Johns. Ch.	
1881; 13 Rep. 266	2	482	399
Sturgis Bk. v. Peck, 8 Kan. 660	520	Swaisland v. Dearsley, 29 Beav.	
Sturlyn v. Albany, Cro. Eliz. 67	516	430	207
Styles v. Wardle, 4 B. & C. 908	893	Swan v. Land Co., 2 H. & C. 175	
Suffell v. Bank, L. R. 7 Q. B. D.		185, 687	
270	696	v. Scott, 11 S. & R. 155	340
Suffolk Bk. v. Worcester Bk., 5		Swartz's App., 3 Brewst. 131	453
Pick. 106	978	Swasey v. Vanderheyden, 10	
Sugar v. Davis, 13 Ga. 462	779	Johns. 33	66
Sugarman v. State, 28 Ark. 142	319	Swayze v. Hull, 3 Halst. 54	407
Suit v. Woodhall, 113 Mass. 391		Sweany v. Hunter, 1 Murph. 181	500
	345, 877	Sweatland v. Tel. Co., 27 Iowa,	
Sullivan, <i>ex parte</i> , 36 L. J. B. 1	886	433	572
v. Byrne, 10 S. C. 122	594	Sweeney v. R. R., 10 Allen, 368	1043
v. Mitcalfe, L. R. 5 C.		Sweet v. Harding, 19 Vt. 587	885
P. D. 455	255 a	v. Lee, 3 M. & G. 452	634
Summers v. Darne, 31 Grat. 791	678	v. Titus, 67 Barb. 327	953
v. Griffiths, 35 Beav. 27		Sweeting v. Turner, L. R. 7 Q. B.	
	166, 518	310	6, 25 b
v. Hoover, 42 Ind. 153	377	Sweetman v. Prince, 26 N. Y. 224;	
Summerville v. R. R., 62 Mo. 391	6	rev'g 62 Barb. 256	230, 231
Sumner v. Jones, 24 Vt. 317		Sweetser v. Lowell, 33 Me. 446	893
	382, 384, 389	Sweigart v. Berk, 8 S. & R. 308	
v. Parker, 36 N. H. 449		814, 817, 819	
	285, 557	Sweny v. Smith, L. R. 7 Eq. 324	974
v. Powell, 2 Mer. 30	832	Swetland v. R. R., 102 Mass.	
v. Williams, 8 Mass. 162	553	276	310
Sunderland Ins. Co. v. Kearney,		Swett v. Colgate, 20 Johns. 196	230
16 Q. B. 925	598, 788, 789	v. Poor, 11 Mass. 549	427
Supervisors v. Schenck, 5 Wall.		v. Shumway, 102 Mass. 365	223
784	143	v. Southworth, 125 Mass.	
Surtees v. Hubbard, 4 Esp. 203	728	417	958, 959
Surtell v. Brailsford, 2 Bay, 333	76	Swift v. Bennett, 10 Cush. 436	65, 70
Susquehanna Bank v. Loomis, 85		v. Castle, 23 Ill. 209	77
N. Y. 207	573	v. Dewy. See Steel Works	
Susquehanna Bridge Co. v. Ins.		v. Dewey.	
Co., 3 Md. 305	138	v. Hawkins, 1 Dall. 17	495
Sussex Peerage Case, 11 Cl. & F.		v. Kelly, 3 Knapp, 257	265
85	360, 363	v. Swift, 34 Beav. 266	400
Sutherland v. Parkins, 75 Ill.		v. Tyson, 16 Pet. 1	453, 795
338	3	v. Winterbotham, L. R. 8	
Sutliff v. Atwood, 15 Ohio St.		Q. B. 244	237, 275, 276, 277
186	318	Swimm v. Bush, 23 Mich. 99	245
Sutphin v. Crozer, 1 Vroom, 257	451	Swinfen v. Swinfen, 2 De G. & J.	
Sutton v. Hawkins, 8 C. & P. 259	977	381	944
v. Tatham, 10 A. & E. 27		Swinyard v. Bowes, 5 M. & S. 62	958
	709, 757	Swire v. Francis, L. R. 3 Ap. Cas.	
v. Temple, 12 M. & W. 52	221	106	270, 275
v. Toomer, 7 B. & C. 416	705	Swires v. Parsons, 5 W. & S. 357	708
Sutton's Hospital, case of, 10 Co.		Switzer v. Skiles, 3 Gilm. 529	443
Rep. 22 b	128	v. Switzer, 26 Grat. 574	90
Suydam v. Moore, 8 Barb. 358		Swope v. Ins. Co.; 93 Penn. St.	
	237, 276	251	483
Swafford v. Ferguson, 3 Lea		v. Leffingwell, 72 Mo. 348	954
(Tenn.), 292	38	Syers v. Jonas, 2 Ex. 111	910

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Sykes v. Beadon, L. R. 11 Ch. D.		Tarr v. Williams, 4 Md. Ch. 68	77
170	349	Tarrabochia v. Hickie, 1 H. & N.	
v. Dixon, 9 Ad. & E. 693	519	183	559
v. Chadwick, 18 Wall. 141	517	Tasker v. Bartlett, 5 Cush. 359	
v. Giles, 5 M. & W. 645	945	312, 571, 680, 983	
Symes v. Hughes, L. R. 9 Eq. 475	355	v. Small, 3 My. & Cr. 63	
Symmes v. Frazier, 6 Mass. 344	24	784, 811	
Symonds v. Carr, 1 Camp. 361	712	Tassey v. Church, 4 W. & S. 346	810 a
v. Gas Co., 11 Beav. 283	775	Tate v. Ins. Co., 13 Gray, 79	814
Sypher v. Savery, 39 Iowa, 258	278	v. Tate, 75 Va. 522	662
Syracuse R. R. v. Collins, 3 Lan-		v. Tate, 1 Dev. & B. Eq. 22	399
sing, 29	956	v. Wellings, 3 T. R. 531	467
		v. Williamson, L. R. 1 Eq.	
		528: 2 Ch. 55	159, 161, 254
		Tatlock v. Harris, 3 T. R. 174	
		728, 855, 856	
		Taussig v. Hart, 58 N. Y. 425	378
		Taverner's case, 1 Dyer, 58 b	318
		Tayloe v. Ins. Co., 9 How. 390	18, 19
		v. Sandiford, 7 Wheat. 14	924
		Taylor, ex parte, 8 De G. M. & G.	
		254	48, 50
		v. Ashton, 11 M. & W. 401	
		214, 241	
		v. Atwood, 47 Conn. 498	103
		v. Baldwin, 10 Barb. 626	763
		v. Bank, 97 Mass. 345	35
		v. Blanchard, 13 Allen,	
		370	430, 431, 433
		v. Board, 31 Penn. St. 73	738
		v. Bowers, L. R. 1 Q. B.	
		D. 291	354, 355
		v. Brewer, 1 M. & S. 290	
		1, 588	
		v. Brown, 2 Beav. 180	892
		v. Bullen, 5 Ex. 779	229, 560
		v. Caldwell, 3 B. & S. 826	
		300, 314, 547	
		v. Chester, L. R. 4 Q. B.	
		309 336, 340, 343, 352, 509	
		v. Cole, 111 Mass. 363	880
		v. Cotten, 6 Ired. 69	756, 763
		v. Cottrell, 16 Ill. 93	150
		v. Daniel, 9 B. Mon. 53	958
		v. Fleet, 1 Barb. 471; 4	
		Barb. 95	244, 251
		v. Gas Co., 10 Ex. 293	365
		v. Gould, 57 Penn. St. 152	
		756, 1018	
		v. Guest, 58 N. Y. 262	242
		v. Hare, 1 B. & P. N. R.	
		260	748, 749
		v. Higgins, 3 East, 169	758
		v. Jaques, 106 Mass. 291	
		148, 150, 483	
		v. Johnston, L. R. 19 Ch.	
		D. 603; 46 L. T. N. S.	
		219	55, 161
		v. Jones, L. R. 1 C. P. D.	
		87	20, 21

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Taylor v. Laird , 25 L. J. Exch. 329 ; 1 H. & N. 266		Tennent v. Tennent , L. R. 2 Sc. & D. 6	165, 518
	22, 717, 719	Tennessee v. Sneed , 96 U. S. 69	1067
v. Leith , 26 Oh. St. 428	214	Tenney v. Foote , 4 Ill. Ap. 594	360, 442, 453
v. Lendey , 9 East, 49	724, 725	Tenny v. Mulvaney , 8 Oreg. 129	899
v. Lincumfelter , 1 Lea (Tenn.) 83	719	Terrett v. Taylor , 9 Cranch, 43	1066
v. Liverpool Co. , L. R. 9 Q. B. 546	666	Terry v. Bissell , 26 Conn. 23	744
v. Longworth , 14 Pet. 172		v. Hopkins , 1 Hill, Ch. 1	399
	203, 887, 888, 890	v. Tuttle , 24 Mich. 206	264
v. Manners , L. R. 1 Ch. 48		v. Wheeler , 25 N. Y. 520	317
	517, 935, 1032	Tesson v. Ins. Co. , 40 Mo. 33	205
v. Moseley , 6 C. & P. 273	698	Tetley v. Wanless , L. R. 2 Ex. 21, 275	1037
v. Nicholls , L. R. 1 C. P. D. 242	20	Tetz v. Butterfield , 54 Wis. 242	594
v. Patrick , 1 Bibb, 168		Tewkesbury v. Bennett , 31 Iowa, 83	219
	103, 120, 533	Tewksbury v. O'Connell , 21 Cal. 60	312
v. Pickett , 52 Iowa, 467	360	Texas v. White , 7 Wall. 700	474
v. Plumer , 3 M. & S. 562	357	Thacker v. Hardy , L. R. 4 Q. B. D. 685 ; 27 W. R. 158	453
v. Pugh , 1 Hare, 608		Thallhimer v. Brinckerhoff , 3 Cow. 647	422, 424
	266, 399	Thame v. Boast , 12 Q. B. 808	967
v. R. R. , 4 D. & J. 559	687	Tharp v. Jarrell , 66 Ind. 52	677
v. R. R. , L. R. 1 C. P. 385	882	Tharsis Co. v. M'Elroy , L. R. 3 Ap. Ca. 1040	594
v. R. R. , L. R. 2 Ex. 356		Thatcher v. Church , 37 Mich. 264	677
	135, 137, 140	Thayer v. Boston , 19 Pick. 511	131
v. St. Helens , L. R. 6 C. D. 264	670	v. Brackett , 12 Mass. 450	977
v. Savage , 12 Mass. 98		v. Burchard , 99 Mass. 508	524
	765, 835	v. Daniels , 113 Mass. 129	845
v. Steamboat Robert Camp- bell , 20 Mo. 254	72	v. Ins. Co. , 10 Pick. 326	17, 18
v. Stockwell , 66 Ind. 505	1067	v. Lapham , 13 Allen, 26	317
v. Taintor , 36 Conn. 242 ; 16 Wall. 366	306, 329	v. Peck , 93 Ill. 357	956
v. Taylor , 8 How. 183		v. Rock , 13 Wend. 53	339, 509
	159, 161	v. Turner , 8 Met. (Mass.) 550	285, 919
v. Taylor , 5 Humph. 110	832	v. Wadsworth , 19 Pick. 349	717, 718
v. Weld , 5 Mass. 109	235	The Brookline , 8 Bost. L. Rep. 70	503
v. Wilson , 11 Met. 44	945	The Distilled Spirits , 11 Wall. 356	245
Taymon v. Mitchell , 1 Md. Ch. 496	241	The Helen , L. R. 1 Ad. & Ec. 1	480
Teague v. Irwin , 127 Mass. 217		The Kathleen , L. R. 4 Adm. 269	715
	232 a, 242, 259	The Rebeckah , 1 Rob. 227	135
Teal v. Auty , 2 B. & B. 99	779	The Rosario , L. R. 2 Adm. D. 41	424
Teasdale v. Braithwaite , L. R. 4 Ch. D. 85	91	The Soblomsten , L. R. 1 Adm. 293	715
Tebbetts v. Dowd , 23 Wend. 379	513	The Teutonia , L. R. 3 Ad. & E. 394 ; 4 P. C. 171	305, 328
Telegraph Co. v. Davenport , 97 U. S. 369	74	Therasson v. Peterson , 2 Keyes, 636	998
Telegraph Dispatch Co. v. Mc- Lean , L. R. 8 Ch. 658	325	Thetcher v. England , 3 C. B. 254	26
Tell City Co. v. Nees , 63 Ind. 245	588	Thetford v. Hubbard , 22 Vt. 440	978, 981
Temple v. Hawley , 1 Sandf. Ch. 153	73		
Templeton v. Horne , 82 Ill. 491	1067		
Tenant v. Elliott , 1 Bos. & P. 3 340, 347, 352, 357			
Tenbrook v. Phila. , 7 Phila. 105 149, 738			

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Thiis v. Byers, L. R. 1 Q. B. D.		Thomas v. Williams, 1 A. & E.	
244	311, 882	685	716
Thimbleby v. Baron, 3 M. & W.		Thomason v. Cooper, 57 Ala. 560	958
210	1036	Thomasson v. Boyd, 13 Ala. 419	58
Thing v. Libbey, 16 Me. 55	56, 57, 58	Thompson v. Botts, 8 Mo. 710	224
Third Nat'l Bk. v. Harrison, 10		v. Bowie, 4 Wall. 463	453
Fed. Rep. 243	453	v. Brown, M. & M. 40	924
Thistlewood v. Cracroft, 1 M. & S.		v. Conover, 3 Vroom,	
500	431	466	580
Thomas v. Afflick, 16 Penn. St. 14	895	v. Davies, 13 Johns.	
v. Atkinson, 38 Ind. 248	811	112	443
v. Brady, 10 Barr, 164	343	v. Downing, 14 M. &	
v. Brown, L. R. 1 Q. B.		W. 403	793
D. 714	533, 743, 747, 750	v. Dulles, 5 Rich. Eq.	
v. Brown, 10 Oh. St. 247		370	892
	90, 395	v. Farden, 1 M. & G.	
v. Cadwallader, Willes,		535	526
496	586	v. Fullinwider, 5 Ill.	
v. Cook, 8 B. & C. 728		App. 551	752
	765, 766	v. Glover, 78 Ky. 193	570
v. Coultas, 76 Ill. 493	282	v. Gordon, 3 Strobb.	
v. Cronise, 16 Ohio, 54		196	785
	450, 452, 454	v. Gould, 20 Pick. 134	
v. Davis, 14 Pick. 353	570		298, 742
v. Dering, 1 Keen, 729	5, 645	v. Hamilton, 12 Pick.	
v. Dike, 11 Vt. 273	42	425	32
v. Evans, 10 East, 101	983	v. Hudson, L. R. 6 Ch.	
v. Folwell, 2 Whart. 11	77	320	925, 933
v. Hatch, 53 Wis. 296		v. Lambert, 44 Iowa,	
	383, 711	239	135, 140, 141
v. Hawkes, 8 M. & W.		v. Lay, 4 Pick. 48	
140	778		56, 62, 63
v. Hayden, cited 19 Vt.		v. Lee, 3 W. & S. 479	733
589	885, 980	v. Lee, 31 Ala. 292	
v. Hodgson, 4 Whart.			168, 241
492	513	v. Lockwood, 15 Johns.	
v. Hunter, 29 Md. 406	382	256	146
v. Knowles, 128 Mass. 22	311	v. McClenachan, 17 S.	
v. McCann, 4 B. Mon.		& R. 110	665
601	214	v. Matthews, 56 Miss.	
v. Miles, 3 Ohio St. 274	436	368	6, 7
v. People, 34 N. Y. 351		v. Means, 11 Sm. & M.	
	213, 242, 242 a	604	433
v. People, 59 Ill. 160	458	v. Nelson, 28 Ind. 431	373
v. Price, 46 L. J. C. 761	77	v. Page, 1 Met. 565	
v. R. R., 101 U. S. 71			528, 808
	136, 137, 138, 139	v. Percival, 5 B. & Ad.	
v. Richmond, 12 Wall.		925	856, 862, 998
349	143, 353, 354, 360	v. R. R., 3 Sandf. Ch.	
v. Roberts, 16 M. & W.		625	1064
778	39, 247	v. R. R., 50 Miss. 315	25
v. Sheppard, 2 McCord,		v. Ray, 46 Ala. 224	3
Eq. 36	158	v. Reynolds, 73 Ill. 11	422
v. Shillibeer, 1 M. & W.		v. Richards, 14 Mich.	
124	858	172	630
v. Shoemaker, 6 W. & S.		v. Rose, 16 Conn. 71	
179	469, 896		258, 262
v. Thomas, 2 Q. B. 851		v. Shannon, 9 Tex. 536	239
	493, 506, 507	v. Simpson, 2 Jones &	
v. Todd, 6 Hill, N. Y. 340	960	L. 110	74

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Thompson v. Thompson, 4 Oh. St.		Thruston v. Thornton, 1 Cush.	
333	785, 786 a	89	3, 4, 6
Thomson v. Davenport, 9 B. & C.		Thurman v. Burt, 53 Ill. 129	144
78	811	v. Wild, 11 A. & E. 453	942
v. Eastwood, L. R. 2 Ap.		Thurnell v. Balbirnie, 2 M. & W.	
Ca. 215	161, 533	786	593
v. James, 18 Dunlop, 1	18	Thurston v. Blanchard, 22 Pick.	
v. Lee County, 3 Wall.		18	285, 736, 956
327	526	v. Ludwig, 6 Oh. St. 1	856
v. Thomson, 7 Ves. 470		v. M'Kown, 6 Mass.	
	336, 407	428	539
Thorn v. Mayor of London, L. R.		v. Percival, 1 Pick. 415	
9 Ex. 163; 10 Ex. 112; 1 Ap.		421, 422, 427	
Ca. 120	302, 311	v. Spratt, 52 Me. 202	
Thornborough v. Whitacre, 2 Ld.			230, 746
Raym. 1164; 6 Mod. 305	301	Thweatt v. McLeod, 56 Ala. 375	288
Thornbury v. Bevill, 1 Y. & C.		Tibbals v. Jacobs, 31 Conn. 428	107 a
554	321	Tibbits v. George, 5 Ad. & El.	
Thorne v. Deas, 4 Johns. 84	494	107	840
v. Ins. Co., 80 Penn. St.		Ticonie Bk. v. Smiley, 27 Me. 225	760
15	365	Tidmarsh v. Grover, 1 M. & S. 735	700
v. Kathan, 51 Vt. 520	87	Tielens v. Hooper, 5 Ex. 830	620
v. Mosher, 5 C. E. Green,		Tiemeyer v. Turnquist, 85 N. Y.	
257	983	516	79
v. Prentiss, 83 Ill. 99	227, 245	Tiernan v. Jackson, 5 Pet. 580	
v. Smith, 10 C. B. 659	949, 956		728, 840
Thornett v. Haines, 15 M. & W.		v. Napier, 5 Yerg. 410	885
367	267, 742	v. Roland, 15 Penn. St.	
Thornhill v. Neats, 8 C. B. N. S.		429	888
831	312	Tilden v. Blair, 21 Wall. 241	463
Thornton v. Appleton, 29 Me.		v. Mayor, 56 Barb. 340	413
298	695, 696	Tileston v. Newell, 13 Mass. 406	127
v. Fairlie, 2 Moore, 397	532	Tilley v. Cook, 103 U. S. 155	207, 661
v. Illingworth, 2 B. &		v. Damon, 11 Cush. 247	
C. 824	31, 36, 56, 63		144, 148, 151
v. Kempster, 5 Taunt.		v. Thomas, L. R. 3 Ch. 61	
786	186, 189		887, 888
v. Maynard, L. R. 10		Tillock v. Webb, 56 Me. 100	382, 388
C. P. 695	942	Tillotson v. Grapes, 4 N. H. 444	520
v. Ogden, 32 N. J. Eq.		Tillon v. Britton, 4 Halst. 120	980
723	158	Tilton Safe Co. v. Tisdale, 48 Vt.	
v. Place, 1 Moo. & R.		83	904
218	330	Timbers v. Katz, 6 W. & S. 290	82
v. Sherratt, 8 Taunt.		Times Life Ass. Co., in re, L. R.	
529	437	5 Ch. 381	864
v. Wynn, 12 Wheat.		Tingley v. Cutler, 7 Conn. 291	540
183	189, 513, 610	Tinkcom v. Lewis, 21 Minn. 132	972
Thoroughgood's case, 2 Coke, 9 a		Tippets v. Walker, 4 Mass. 595	810 a
	185, 292	Tipton v. Locomotive Works, 103	
Thorp v. Coal Co., 48 N. Y. 253	786 a	U. S. 523	141
Thorpe v. Beavans, 73 N. C. 241	733	v. Triplett, 1 Metc. (Ky.)	
v. Coleman, 1 C. B. 990	454	570	231
v. Jackson, 2 Y. & C. 553	832	Tisdale v. Bailey, 6 Ired. Eq.	
v. Thorpe, 1 L. Raym. 662	531	358	266
v. Thorpe, 3 B. & Ad. 580	724	v. Buckmore, 33 Me. 461	919
v. Thorpe, 12 S. C. 154	239, 373	Titcomb v. Vantyle, 84 Ill. 371	
Thrall v. Newell, 19 Vt. 202			98, 114, 117 a
	223, 654, 744	v. Wood, 38 Me. 561	291
v. Wright, 38 Vt. 494	71	Titman v. Titman, 64 Penn. St.	
Thrupp v. Fielder, 2 Esp. 628	63	480	719

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Tobey v. Barber, 2 Am. L. C. 5th ed. 245	955	Towle v. Larrabee, 26 Me. 464	382
v. Robinson, 99 Ill. 222	338, 376	v. Leavitt, 3 Fost. 360	267
v. Wood, 123 Mass. 88	58	Towne v. Collins, 14 Mass. 500	734
Tobin v. Bell, 61 Ala. 125	242	v. Fiske, 127 Mass. 125	377
Todd v. Clapp, 118 Mass. 495	58	v. Rice, 122 Mass. 67	872
v. Fambro, 62 Ga. 664	215, 242	v. Wiley, 23 Vt. 355	53
v. Grove, 33 Md. 188	159, 161	Towner v. Lucas, 13 Grat. 705	196
v. Kerrich, 8 Exch. 151	718	Townes v. Birchett, 12 Leigh, 173	945
v. Reid, 4 B. & Ald. 210	943	Townsend's case, L. R. 13 Eq. 148	18
v. Summers, 2 Grat. 167	553	Townsend v. Cowles, 31 Ala. 428	259, 264
Toker v. Toker, 31 Beav. 629	538	v. Crowdy, 8 C. B. N. S. 477	196, 753
Toledo Bk. v. Bond, 1 Ohio St. 622	1071	v. Hubbard, 4 Hill, 351	810 a, 828
Toleman v. Portbury, L. R. 6 Q. B. 245	615	v. Hunt, Cro. Car. 408	514
Toler v. Armstrong, 4 Wash. C. C. 297; 11 Wheat. 258	339, 443	v. Long, 77 Penn. St. 143	785
Toll Bridge Co. v. Betsworth, 30 Conn. 380	133	v. Riley, 46 N. H. 300	462
Tom v. Goodrich, 2 Johns. 213	684, 860	v. Toker, L. R. 1 Ch. Ap. 446	540
Tome v. R. R., 39 Md. 36	131, 270	v. Wells, 3 Day, 327	619, 621, 623
Tomlinson v. Matthews, 98 Ill. 178	377, 537	v. Westacott, 2 Beav. 340	377
v. Savage, 6 Ired. Eq. 430	267	Townshend v. Stangroom, 6 Ves. 328	208
Tompkins v. Dudley, 25 N. Y. 272	302, 311	v. Windham, 2 Ves. Jr. 1	377
v. Philips, 12 Ga. 52	505	Townsley v. Sumroll, 2 Pet. 170	505
Toms v. Wilson, 4 B. & S. 442	882, 886	Towson v. Bank, 6 Har. & J. 47	985
Tondeur, ex parte, L. R. 5 Eq. 160	293	Tozer v. Saturlee, 3 Grant, 162	109, 123
Tone v. Doelger, 6 Rob. (N. Y.) 251	312	Tracey v. Sacket, 1 Oh. St. 54	159, 167
Tool Company v. Norris, 2 Wall. 45	402, 403	Tracy v. Jenks, 15 Pick. 465	391
Toomer v. Rutland, 57 Ala. 379	695, 700	v. Strong, 2 Conn. 659	978, 980
Topham v. Braddick, 1 Taunt. 572	576	v. Talmage, 14 N. Y. 162	335, 338, 343, 345, 353, 511
v. Morecraft, 8 E. & B. 972	727	Traders' Bk. v. Ins. Co., 62 Me. 519	205
Topping v. Root, 5 Cow. 404	567, 621	Trafton v. Hawes, 102 Mass. 533	682
Torrance v. Bolton, L. R. 8 Ch. 118	245, 249, 289, 743	Traill v. Baring, 33 L. J. C. 521; 4 De G. J. & S. 318	242, 249, 252, 257
Torrens v. Campbell, 74 Penn. St. 470	400, 785, 863	Train v. Collins, 2 Pick. 145	467
Torrington v. Norwich, 21 Conn. 543	400	v. Gold, 5 Pick. 380	9, 13, 516
Totten v. U. S., 92 U. S. 105	340	Trambly v. Ricard, 130 Mass. 259	185
Tottenham v. Emmet, 14 W. R. 3	169	Trammel v. Chipman, 74 Ind. 474	205
Toulmin v. Hedley, 2 C. & K. 157	916	Trask v. Vinson, 20 Pick. 105	520, 885 a
v. Steere, 3 Mer. 210	805	Traub v. Milliken, 57 Me. 63	184
Toussaint v. Martinnant, 2 T. R. 105	768	Treadwell v. Bulkley, 4 Day, 395	495
Towers v. Barrett, 1 T. R. 133	919	v. Davis, 34 Cal. 601	511
Towle v. Dresser, 73 Me. 252	35, 39, 56	Treat v. Melodeon Co., 35 Conn. 543	433
		v. Orono, 26 Me. 217	297
		v. Stanton, 14 Conn. 445	784, 799
		Trebilcock v. Wilson, 12 Wall. 687	984

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Treloar v. Rigge, L. R. 9 Ex. 151		Tucker Manufacturing Co. v. Fair-	
	591, 663	banks, 98 Mass. 101	810 a
Trevor, <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 1 C. D. 297	886	Tuckerman v. French, 7 Greenl.	
v. Perkins, 5 Whart. 244	759	115	570
v. Wood, 36 N. Y. 307	18, 27	v. Hinkley, 9 Allen,	
Trew v. Burton, 1 C. & M. 533	696	452	389
Trimble v. Strother, 25 Oh. St.		v. Newhall, 17 Mass.	
378	840, 858	581	821, 947
Trimby v. Vignier, 1 Bing. N. C.		Tuckers v. Oxley, 5 Cranch, 34	1026
151	637	Tufnell v. Constable, 7 Ad. & El.	
Tripp v. Armitage, 4 M. & W. 687	708	798	311
Trist v. Child, 21 Wal. 441		Tuggle v. McMath, 38 Ga. 648	202
	402, 427, 441	Tugman v. Steamship Co., 76 N.	
Trough's Estate, 75 Penn. St. 115	496	Y. 207	730
Troughton v. Hill, 2 Hayw. 406	76	Tully v. Herrin, 44 Miss. 626	841
Troup v. Wood, 4 Johns. Ch. 228	443	Tunison v. Chamblin, 88 Ill. 378	
Trovinger v. McBurney, 5 Cow.		45, 58, 677	
253	373	Tunstall v. Boothby, 10 Sim. 542	412
Trowbridge v. Holcomb, 4 Oh. St.		Tupper v. Cadwell, 12 Met. 559	
38	619		68, 69, 71
Trower v. Newcome, 3 Meriv. 704		Turberville v. Whitehouse, 1 C. &	
	245, 261	P. 94; 12 Price, 692	67
Troy v. Bland, 58 Ala. 197	750	Turley v. Ins. Co., 25 Wend. 374	593
Troy Academy v. Nelson, 24 Vt.		Turnbull v. Bowyer, 40 N. Y. 456	573
189	528	v. Gadsden, 2 Strobb.	
True v. Tel. Co., 60 Me. 9	791	Kq. 14	236, 241, 242
Trueman v. Hurst, 1 T. R. 40	66	Turner v. Adams, 46 Mo. 95	443
Truett v. Chaplin, 4 Hawks, 178	533	v. Chrisman, 20 Ohio, 332	513
Trullinger v. Kofoed, 7 Oreg. 228		v. Collins, L. R. 7 Ch.	
	924, 927	329	161, 168
Trumbull v. Nicholson, 27 Ill. 149	944	v. Davies, 2 Esp. 478	765, 766
Trundy v. Farrar, 32 Me. 225	130	v. Diaper, 2 M. & G. 241	1010
Truscott v. King, 2 Seld. 147	933	v. Gaither, 83 N. C. 357	57
Trust v. Delaplaine, 3 E. D. Smith,		v. Harvey, Jac. 169	252
219	267	v. Hayden, 4 B. & C. 1	873
Trustees v. Haskell, 73 Me. 140	528	v. Liverpool Docks, 6 Ex.	
v. Stetson, 5 Pick. 506	528	543	877, 878, 880
v. Tatman, 13 Ill. 27	1066	v. Mason, 14 M. & W. 112	718
v. Wheeler, 61 N. Y. 88	842	v. Robinson, 5 B. & Ad.	
Tryon v. Miller, 1 Whart. 11	533	789	717
Tuck v. Downing, 76 Ill. 71		v. Rooks, 10 A. & E. 47	92
	242, 260, 261	v. Rusk, 53 Md. 65	
Tuckahoe Canal Co. v. R. R., 11			103, 107, 110, 114
Leigh, 42	1064	v. Samson, L. R. 2 Q. B.	
Tucker v. Andrews, 13 Me. 124	399	D. 23	573
v. Barrow, 7 B. & C. 623	779	v. Stones, 1 D. & L. 122	744
v. Madden, 44 Me. 206	208	v. Thomas, L. R. 6 C. P.	
v. Moreland, 1 Am. L. C.,		610	1029
4th ed. 244; 10 Pet.		v. Trisby, 1 Stra. 168	68, 69
58	31, 36, 39,	v. Turner, L. R. 14 Ch.	
	56, 59, 60, 61, 63	D. 829	1035
v. Raleigh, 75 N. C. 267	138	v. Turner, 44 Mo. 535	161
v. Tucker, 29 Mo. 350; 32		v. Wilcox, 54 Ga. 593	658
Mo. 464	399	Turney v. Dodwell, 3 E. & B. 136	956
v. West, 29 Ark. 386		Turnpike Co. v. Com., 2 Watts,	
	382, 384, 389	433	285
v. White, 125 Mass. 344	214	v. Coy, 13 Oh. St.	
v. Wilson, 1 P. Wms. 261	576	84	524
v. Woods, 12 Johns. 190		Turquand v. Rhodes, 37 L. J. C.	
	2, 4, 13, 523	830	190

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Tuscumbia, etc. R. R. v. Rhodes, 8 Ala. 206	1013	Ungley v. Ungley, L. R. 5 Ch. D. 887	282
Tuthill v. Babcock, 2 Wood. & M. 298	245	Union Bank v. Bank, 43 N. Y. 452	196
Tuttle v. Brown, 4 Gray, 457	220, 494	v. Geary, 5 Pet. 99	198, 532
v. Cooper, 10 Pick. 281	833, 834	v. Matthews, 98 U. S. 621	136
v. Holland, 43 Vt. 542	20, 343	v. Middlebrook, 33 Conn. 95	185
v. Love, 7 Johns. 470	4	v. Roberts, 45 Wis. 373	700, 702
v. Tuttle, 12 Met. 551	533, 997	Union Canal Co. v. Antillo, 4 W. & S. 553	138
Tutton v. Darke, 5 H. & N. 647	390	Union Ins. Co. v. Campbell, 95 Ill. 267	677
Tweddle v. Atkinson, 1 B. & S. 393	506, 507, 784, 807	v. Howes, 124 Mass. 470	1029
Twitchell v. Bridge, 42 Vt. 68	241	Union Pacific R. R. v. U. S. 99 U. S. 700	1064
v. Com., 9 Barr, 211	376	Union Savings Asso. v. Kehlor, 7 Mo. Ap. 158	752
v. Shaw, 10 Cush. 48	997	United States v. Bainbridge, 1 Mason, 71	33
Twopenny v. Young, 3 B. & C. 208; 5 D. & R. 259	684, 831	v. Boyer, 4 Dill, 407	379
Twycross v. Grant, L. R. 2 C. P. D. 469	255 a	v. Bradley, 10 Pet. 343	338
Twyne's case, 3 Co. Rep. 80 a; 1 Smith's L. C., 7th Am. ed. 33	376, 377	v. City Bank, 21 How. 356	130
Tye v. Fynmore, 3 Camp. 462	224, 915	v. Eckford, 17 Pet. 251; 1 How. 250;	924, 934
Tyers v. Iron Co., L. R. 8 Ex. 315	870	v. Gray, 2 Cranch C. C. 675	374
Tyler v. Bland, 9 M. & W. 338	979	v. Great Falls Co., 21 Md. 119	1064
v. Smith, 18 B. Mon. 793	340	v. Grossmayer, 9 Wall. 72	341, 473
v. Yates, L. R. 6 Ch. 665	170	v. Huckabee, 16 Wall. 414	149
v. Young, 2 Scam. 444	520	v. January, 7 Cranch, 572	934
Tyree v. Rives, 57 Ala. 173	698	v. Johnson Co., 5 Dill. 207	1067
Tyrrell v. Bank of London, 10 H. L. C. 26	161	v. Kirkpatrick, 9 Wheat. 720	555, 933, 934
v. Tyrrell, 54 Md. 167	1021	v. Le Baron, 19 How. 73	678
v. Washburn, 6 Allen, 466	767	v. Lincoln Co., 5 Dill. 184	1067
Tyson v. Booth, 100 Mass. 258	239	v. Nat. Bank, 6 Fed. Rep. 852	196
v. Doe, 15 Vt. 571	580	v. Norton, 97 U. S. 164	885
v. Hardesty, 29 Md. 305	902	v. Olney, 1 Abbot, (U. S.) 275; 1	458
v. Pollock, 1 Pen. & W. 375	955	v. Spalding, 2 Ma- son, 476	696, 702
v. Rickard, 3 H. & J. 109	461		
v. Tyson, 31 Md. 134	201		
U.			
Udell v. Atherton, 7 H. & N. 172			
251, 270, 278, 282			
Ulam v. Boyd, 87 Penn. St. 477	810 a		
Ulmer v. Cunningham, 2 Greenl. 117	814		
Underhill v. Horwood, 10 Ves. 209	144, 165		
Underwood v. Brockman, 4 Dana, 309	199		
v. Dollins, 47 Mo. 259	680		
v. Nicholls, 17 C. B. 239	943		
v. Waldron, 12 Mich. 73	528		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
United States v. The Isaac Hammett, 10 Pitts. L. J. (O. S.) 97	478	Vallance v. Ins. Co., 42 Penn. St. 441	239
v. Wardwell, 5 Masson, 82 923, 933,	934	Vallé v. Cerré, 36 Mo. 575	793
U. S. Tel. Co. v. Gildersleeve, 29 Md. 232	438	Valpey v. Rea, 130 Mass. 384	107
Unity Asso. v. King, 3 De G. & J. 63	74	Valpy v. Manley, 1 C. B. 594	740
Universal Life Ass. Co., <i>ex parte</i> , L. R. 10 Eq. 458	846	v. Oakley, 16 Q. B. 941	956
University v. Livingston, Sup. Ct. Iowa, 1881; 13 Rep. 584	528	Valton v. Ass. Soc., 1 Keyes, 21	256
v. McNair, 2 Ired. Eq. 605	496	Van Alstine v. Wimple, 5 Cow. 162	624
Univ. of North Carolina v. Foy, 1 Murph. 58	1063	Van Alstyne v. Van Slyck, 10 Barb. 383	828
University of Vermont v. Buell, 2 Vt. 48	528	Van Arsdale v. Howard, 5 Ala. 596	214, 217, 250
Unthank v. Ins. Co., 4 Biss. 357	27	Vanartsdalen v. Vanartsdalen, 14 Penn. St. 384	400
Unwin v. Leaper, 1 M. & G. 747	353, 415	Van Bracklin v. Fonda, 12 Johns. 468	221, 222
Updike v. Ten Broeck, 3 Vroom, 105	712, 901	Van Buren v. Digges, 11 How. 461	580
v. Titus, 2 Beasley, 151	512	Vanbuskirk v. Ins. Co., 14 Conn. 141	842
Upham v. Brimhall, 11 Metc. 526	463, 933	Van Casteel v. Booker, 2 Exch. 691	877, 878
v. Lefavour, 11 Met. 174	929, 933	Vance v. Bloomer, 20 Wend. 196	575, 882, 987, 990
Upperton v. Nickolson, L. R. 6 Ch. 436	887	v. Campbell, 1 Dana, 229	397
Upshaw v. Debow, 7 Bush, 442	245	v. Lowther, L. R. 1 Ex. D. 176	696, 700
Upton v. Englehart, 3 Dill. 496	245, 259	v. Lukenbill, 9 B. Monr. 249	997
v. Hubbard, 28 Conn. 274	845	v. Nogle, 70 Penn. St. 176	2, 3
v. Moore, 44 Vt. 552	844	v. Vance, 32 La. An. 186	1067
v. Trebilcock, 91 U. S. 45	264, 284	Vanderbilt v. Adams, 7 Cow. 349	1064
Urban v. Grimes, 2 Grant Cas. 96	48	Vanderheyden v. Mallory, 1 Comst. 452	78
Usher v. D'Wolfe, 13 Mass. 290	841	Van Derveer v. Wright, 6 Barb. 547	512
v. McBratney, 3 Dill, 385	402	Van Deusen v. Sweet, 51 N. Y. 378	98, 107, 123
Usparicha v. Noble, 13 East, 332	475	Vandewalker v. Osmer, 65 Barb. 556	224, 242
Utica Ins. Co. v. Bloodgood, 4 Wend. 652	354	Van Donge v. Van Donge, 23 Mich. 321	206
v. Kip, 8 Cow. 20	354	Van Dusen v. Parley, 40 Iowa, 70	205, 208
v. Scott, 19 Johns. 1	354	Vandyck v. Hewitt, 1 East, 96	352, 353, 469, 477
Utley v. Donaldson, 94 U. S. 29	4	Van Dyck v. Van Beuren, 1 Johns. 345	338
		Van Dyke v. Davis, 2 Mich. 144	533
V.		Vane v. Cobbold, 1 Exch. 798	246
Vail v. Foster, 4 Comst. 312	955	Van Epps v. Harrison, 5 Hill, 63	260
v. R. R., 63 Mo. 230	309	Van Horn v. Hann, 39 N. J. L. 207	101, 121
v. Strong, 10 Vt. 457	963	Van Hoven v. Irish, U. S. Cir. Ct. Minn. 1882; 10 Fed. Rep. 13	389
Valentine v. Ford, 2 Browne, 193	76	Van Hulan v. Kanouse, 13 Mich. 303	984
v. Foster, 1 Met. (Mass.) 520	512, 513	Van Kirk v. Skillman, 5 Vroom, 109	77
v. Stewart, 15 Cal. 387	338		
Vallance v. Dewar, 1 Camp. 503	637		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Vanleer v. Earle, 26 Penn. St. 277	189	Verner v. Sweitzer, 32 Penn. St. 208	22, 572
Van Marter v. Babcock, 23 Barb. 633	433	Vernol v. Vernol, 63 N. Y. 45	677, 681
Van Ness v. Washington, 4 Pet. 232	707	Vernon v. Keys, 12 East, 632; 4 Taunt. 488	246, 257
Van Ostrand v. Reed, 1 Wend. 424	956	Vertue v. R. R., 5 Exch. 280	526
Van Patton v. Beals, 46 Iowa, 62	102, 114	Vicary v. Moore, 2 Watts, 451	705
Van Pelt v. Corwine, 6 Ind. 363	34, 42	Vickers v. Cowell, 1 Beav. 529	820
Van Petten v. Richardson, 68 Mo. 379	765	Vickery v. Welch, 19 Pick. 523	431, 436
Van Rensselaer v. Aikin, 44 N. Y. 126	527, 1005	Vigers v. Pike, 8 Cl. & F. 562	244, 245, 285, 286, 288
Van Schaick v. R. R., 38 N. Y. 346	811	Vilhac v. Biven, 28 Cal. 409	984
Vansittart v. Vansittart, 2 De G. & J. 249	400	Vinall v. Burrill, 16 Pick. 401	779
Vansteenburg v. Hoffman, 15 Barb. 28	954	v. Richardson, 13 Allen, 521	954
Vantine v. Wood, 13 Penn. St. 270	730	Vinas v. Ins. Co., 27 La. An. 367	131
Van Toll v. R. R., 12 C. B. N. S. 75	202 a	Vincennes Univ. v. Indiana, 14 How. 268	1063
Van Vranken v. R. R., 55 Iowa, 135	857	Vincent v. Groom, 1 Yerg. 430	486
Vanwickle v. R. R., 2 Green, 162	135	v. Leland, 100 Mass. 432	494
Van Wyck v. Allen, 69 N. Y. 61	224	Viney v. Chaplin, 2 D. & J. 468	944
v. Brasher, 81 N. Y. 260	118	Violett v. Patton, 5 Cranch, 142	13, 497
v. Walters, 16 Hun, N. Y. 209	470	Vischer v. Yeates, 11 Johns. 23	729
Vanzant v. Arnold, 31 Ga. 210	872	Vizonneau v. Pegram, 2 Leigh, 183	77
Varney v. French, 19 N. H. 233	382	Voltz v. Harris, 40 Ill. 155	570 a
v. Hickman, 5 C. B. 271	451	Von Keller v. Schulting, 50 N. Y. 108	206
Vassar v. Camp, 11 N. Y. 441; 14 Barb. 341	18	Von Windisch v. Klaus, 46 Conn. 433	483
Vasse v. Smith, 6 Cranch, 226	53	Voorhees v. Dorr, 51 Barb. 580	421, 422, 429
Vaughan v. Fowler, 14 S. C. 355	695	v. Earl, 2 Hill, 288	189, 290, 610
v. Howe, 20 Wis. 497	616	v. Wait, 3 Green (N. J.), 343	33
v. Marable, 64 Ala. 60	425	Voorhis v. Murphy, 26 N. J. Eq. 434	196
v. Porter, 16 Vt. 266	520	Vorley v. Cooke, 1 Giff. 230	185
v. Vanderstegen, 2 Drew. 363	89	Vose v. Dolan, 108 Mass. 155	698
Veach v. Thompson, 15 Iowa, 380	154	v. Ins. Co., 6 Cush. 42	256
Veasey v. Doton, 3 Allen, 380	242	Vrooman v. Turner, 69 N. Y. 280	785, 786 a
Veazie v. Williams, 3 Story, 611; 8 How. 134	267, 270, 284, 289, 919, 1034	Vulliamy v. Noble, 3 Mer. 593	1021
Veazy v. Harmony, 7 Greenl. 91	987	Vyse v. Wakefield, 6 M. & W. 442	571, 621
Venezuela R. R. v. Kisch, L. R. 2 H. L. 99	255, 289		
Venice v. Murdock, 92 U. S. 494	367		
Vent v. Osgood, 19 Pick. 572	31, 34, 42		
Ventress v. Smith, 10 Pet. 161	734		
Verges v. Giboney, 38 Mo. 458	971, 984		
Vernede v. Weber, 1 H. & N. 311	563		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Wadsworth v. Allcott, 2 Seld. 64	714	Walford v. Duchess de Pienne, 2	
v. Sharpsteen, 8 N. Y. 388	123	Esp. 554	76
v. Sherman, 14 Barb. 169	123	Walker's Estate, 3 Rawle, 243	719
v. Smith, L. R. 6 Q. B. 332	594	Walker v. Ames, 2 Cow. 428	740
v. Williams, 100 Mass. 126	377	v. Barnes, 5 Taunt. 240	980
Wagenseller v. Simmers, 97 Penn. St. 465	1033	v. Christian, 21 Grat. 291	938
Wager v. Chew, 15 Penn. St. 323	9 a	v. Clements, 15 Q. B. 1046	1018
v. Reid, 3 T. & C. (N. Y.) 332	119	v. Cronin, 107 Mass. 555	812
v. Schuyler, 1 Wend. 553	899	v. Davis, 1 Gray, 506	53, 118
Wagonseller v. Snyder, 7 Watts, 343	450	v. Day, 8 Baxt. 77	282
Wailing v. Toll, 9 Johns. 141	70	v. Ellis, 12 Ill. 470	31
Wain v. Bailey, 10 A. & E. 616	694	v. Gregory, 36 Ala. 180	373
Wainscott v. Silvers, 13 Ind. 497	318	v. Jeffries, 45 Miss. 160	343
Wainwright v. Webster, 11 Vt. 576	960	v. McCulloch, 4 Greenl. 421	831
Wait v. Baker, 2 Ex. 1	877, 878	v. McKay, 2 Metc. (Ky.) 294	1019
v. Brewster, 31 Vt. 516	956	v. Mottram, L. R. 19 Ch. D. 355; 45 L. T. N. S. 659	435
v. Wait, 28 Vt. 350	80, 683	v. Nevill, 3 H. & C. 403	1039
Waite v. Jones, 1 Scott, 59; 1 Bing. N. C. 656	338, 339, 509	v. Perkins, 1 W. Bl. 517; 3 Burr. 1568	373
v. Leggett, 8 Cow. 195	181, 197, 753	v. R. R., 34 Miss. 245	260
Waithman v. Wakefield, 1 Camp. 120	84	v. Rostron, 9 M. & W. 411	728, 855
Waitzfelder v. Kahnweiler, 56 Barb. 300	474	v. Scott, 13 Ark. 644	944
Wake v. Griffin, 9 Neb. 47	377	v. Simpson, 7 W. & S. 83	72, 86, 87
v. Harrop, 6 H. & N. 768	185	v. State, 12 S. C. 200	367
Wakefield v. Brown, 9 Q. B. 209	814	v. Tucker, 70 Ill. 527	298, 303, 314, 318
v. Lithgow, 3 Mass. 249	961, 962	v. Walker, 9 Wall. 743	395
v. Newton, 6 Q. B. 276	149, 737	v. Walker, 13 Ired. 335	495
Wakefield Banking Co. v. Local Board, 44 L. T. N. S. 697	402	Wall's case, L. R. 15 Eq. 18	18
Wakeman v. Dalley, 51 N. Y. 27	259	Wall v. Scales, 1 Dev. Eq. 472	537
Walan v. Kerby, 99 Mass. 1	343, 353	v. Wall, 30 Miss. 91	677
Walbridge v. Harroon, 18 Vt. 448	513	Wallace v. Agry, 4 Mason, 336	954, 956
Walcott v. Canfield, 3 Conn. 194	833, 834	v. Jewell, 21 Oh. St. 163	700
Walden v. Finch, 70 Penn. St. 460	302	v. Kelsall, 7 M. & W. 264	950, 982, 998
v. Ins. Co., 12 La. 134	256	v. Lark, 12 S. C. 576	343
v. Skinner, 101 U. S. 577	208	v. Latham, 52 Miss. 291	60
Waldo v. Martin, 4 B. & C. 319	407	v. Lewis, 4 Harring. 75	60
Waldron v. Evans, 1 Dak. Ter. 11	407	v. Miner, 6 Ohio, 366	89
v. Romaine, 22 N. Y. 368	877	v. Morss, 5 Hill (N. Y.) 391	53
Waldsmith v. Waldsmith, 2 Ohio, 156	822	v. Rappelye, Sup. Ct. Ill. 1881	525
		v. Sharon, 84 N. C. 164	1066
		Waller v. Armistead, 2 Leigh, 11	399
		v. Dalt, 1 Ch. Ca. 276; 1 Dick. 8	467
		v. Lacy, 1 M. & G. 54	923, 932
		v. Parker, 5 Cold. 476	149
		Wallis v. Carpenter, 13 Allen, 19	825
		v. Day, 2 M. & W. 273	437
		v. Wallis, 4 Mass. 135	655

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Walls v. Bailey, 49 N. Y.	464 637	Ware v. Cartledge, 24 Ala.	622 31
Walmesley v. Booth, 2 Atk.	25 161	v. Gardner, L. R. 7 Eq.	317 377
Walmesly v. Cooper, 11 A. & E.	216 1038	v. Jones, 61 Ala.	288 344
Waln v. Hewes, 5 S. & R.	468 1021	v. Miller, 9 S. C.	13 1067
Walpole v. Orford, 3 Ves.	402 3	v. Thompson, 2 Beas.	66 469
Walrad v. Petrie, 4 Wend.	575 620	Wareham Bk. v. Burt, 5 Allen,	113 311
Walsh v. Barton, 24 Oh. St.	28 267	Warfield v. Booth, 33 Md.	63 431, 433, 638
v. Hall, 66 N. C.	233 245	Waring v. Hoggart, Ry. & M.	39 186
v. Lennon, 98 Ill.	27 955	v. Mason, 18 Wend.	425 223
v. People, 65 Ill.	58 413	Warlow v. Harrison, 1 E. & E.	295, 309 10, 25 b
v. Young, 110 Mass.	396 47, 48	Warn v. Sandown, 3 Keb.	238 151 a
Walstab v. Spottiswoode, 15 M. & W.	501 520, 742	Warne v. Routledge, L. R. 18 Eq.	497 77
Walter v. Gernant, 13 Penn. St.	515 443	Warner v. Daniels, 1 Wood. & M.	90 165, 214, 244, 245
v. Haynes, Ry. & M.	149 962	v. Hitchins, 5 Barb.	666 318
v. James, L. R. 6 Ex.	124 942	v. M'Kay, 1 M. & W.	591 184
v. Ross, 2 Wash. C. C.	283 793	v. Martin, 11 How.	209 180
v. Smith, 5 B. & Ald.	439 994	v. Morrison, 3 Allen,	566 765
Walton v. Eldridge, 1 Allen,	203 938	v. Myrick, 16 Minn.	91 778
v. Hastings, 4 Camp.	223 700	v. People, 2 Denio,	272 1071
v. Mascall, 13 M. & W.	452 570 a, 573, 575	v. Ryan, 28 Wis.	517 92
Wampler v. Wampler, 30 Grat.	454 282	Warren v. Batchelder, 15 N. H.	129 784, 853
Wann v. Kelly, 2 McCrary,	628 352	v. Batchelder, 16 N. H.	580 786
v. Tel. Co., 37 Mo.	472 438	v. Chapman, 105 Mass.	87 338, 930
Wannell v. Kem, 57 Mo.	478 245	v. Coal Co., 83 Penn. St.	437 219
Want v. Stallibrass, L. R. 8 Ex.	175 887	v. Comings, 6 Cush.	103 936
Waples v. Hastings, 8 Harring.	403 39	v. Hewitt, 45 Ga.	501 453
Ward's case, L. R. 10 Eq.	659 17	v. Hodge, 121 Mass.	106 504, 997
Ward v. Allen, 2 Met.	53 483	v. Jones, 51 Me.	146 433
v. Audland, 16 M. & W.	862 496	v. Mains, 7 Johns.	476 604, 891, 985
v. Bourne, 56 Me.	161 956	v. Skinner, 20 Conn.	559 504, 935, 997, 998, 999
v. Byrne, 5 M. & W.	548 430, 431, 437	v. Stearns, 19 Pick.	73 528
v. Dulaney, 23 Miss.	410 113	v. Tyler, 81 Ill.	15 285, 730
v. Fryer, 19 Wend.	494 532, 710	v. Walker, 23 Me.	453 1032
v. Henry, 5 Conn.	595 768	v. Wheeler, 21 Me.	484 555, 581, 840
v. Hobbs, L. R. 2 Q. B. D.	331; 3 Q. B. D. 150; 4 Ap. Ca. 13 222, 229, 248, 250, 251, 904	v. Whitney, 24 Me.	561 505, 512, 513
v. Johnson, 13 Mass.	148 684	v. Williamson, 8 Baxt.	427 533
v. Lewis, 4 Pick.	518 681	Warrick v. Warrick, 3 Atk.	291 211
v. Lumley, 5 H. & N.	87, 656 696, 704	Warrington v. Early, 2 E. & B.	763 700
v. Martin, 3 Monr.	18 1012, 1025	v. Furber, 8 East,	242 573
v. Morrison, 25 Vt.	593 845	Wartemberg v. Spiegel, 31 Mich.	400 159
v. Smith, 7 Wall.	447 364	Warwick v. Bruce, 2 M. & S.	205; 6 Taunt. 118 31, 32, 73
Wardell v. Railroad Co., 103 U. S.	651 408		
Warder v. Tucker, 7 Mass.	449 199, 520		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Warwicke v. Noakes, Peake, 67		Watson v. Murray, 8 C. E. Green,	
	961, 962	257	349, 403
Washburn v. Hale, 10 Pick. 429	76	v. Pears, 2 Camp. 294	654
Washington Bank v. Eoky, 51 Mo.		v. R. R., L. R. 2 C. P. 593	
272	695		842, 1025
Wason v. Rowe, 16 Vt. 525	631	v. Randall, 20 Wend. 201	
Water Co. v. Ware, 16 Wall.			532, 865
566	131	v. Walker, 23 N. H. 471	
Waterhouse v. Skinner, 2 B. & P.			571, 621
447	581, 584	Watson Coal Co. v. Casteel, 68	
Waterman v. Barratt, 4 Harring.		Ind. 476	284
311	150	Watters v. Smith, 2 B. & Ad. 889	
v. Vose, 43 Me. 504	700		949, 1000
Waters v. Barral, 2 Bush, 598	107	Watts' Appeal, 78 Penn. St. 370	
v. Bean, 15 Ga. 358	512		138, 140
v. Bristol, 26 Conn. 398	2	Watts v. Brooks, 3 Ves. 612	349
v. Ins. Co., 5 El. & Bl.		v. Cummins, 59 Penn. St.	
870	457	84	186, 190, 215, 216,
v. Riley, 2 Har. & G. 305			245, 254, 259
	765, 832	v. Everett, 47 Iowa, 269	1067
v. Tazewell, 9 Md. 291	397	v. Frenche, 19 N. J. Eq. 407	
v. Tompkins, 2 C. M. & R.			504, 997
723	924	v. Porter, 3 E. & B. 743	
v. Waters, 32 Penn. St.			842, 1046
307	888	v. Van Ness, 1 Hill, 76	382
Waters Heater Co. v. Mansfield,		Waugh v. Bussell, 5 Taunt. 707	696
48 Vt. 378	589	v. Cope, 6 M. & W. 824	930
v. Smith, 120		v. Morris, L. R. 8 Q. B.	
Mass. 144	239	202	246, 343
Watertown Ins. Co. v. Simmons,		v. Waugh, 28 N. Y. 94	633
131 Mass. 85	570 a	Way v. Hearn, 13 C. B. N. S. 292	
Watkins v. Baird, 6 Mass. 506			210, 237.
	144, 150	v. Langley, 15 Oh. St. 392	380
v. Eames, 9 Cush. 537		v. Sperry, 6 Cush. 238	513
	528, 808	v. Wright, 5 Met. 380	329
v. Halstead, 2 Sandf.		Waydell v. Luer, 3 Denio, 410; 5	
311	512	Hill, 448	860, 949, 954
v. Hill, 8 Pick. 522	956	Wayland v. Moseley, 5 Ala. 430	793
v. Hodges, 6 Har. & J.		Waymell v. Reed, 5 T. R. 599	
38	523		341, 343, 446
v. Nash, L. R. 20 Eq.		Wayne v. Sands, Freem. K. B.	
262	677	351	151 a
v. Paine, 57 Ga. 50	877	v. Steamboat Pike, 16	
v. Robb, 2 Esp. 711	978	Ohio, 421	630
v. Turner, 34 Ark. 663	505	Weak v. Escott, 9 Price, 595	670
v. Watkins, 7 Yerg. 283	395	Weakley v. Pearce, 5 Heisk. 401	319
Watkinson v. Inglesby, 5 Johns.		Weakly v. Bell, 9 Watts, 273	
386	1006		856, 954, 956
Watson, ex parte, 16 Ves. 265	54	Weart v. Rose, 1 C. E. Gr. 290	190
v. Atwood, 25 Conn. 313	245	Weathers v. Ray, 4 Dana, 474	784
v. Bennett, 12 Barb. 196		Weaver v. Carpenter, 42 Iowa,	
	130, 131	343	288
v. Brewster, 1 Barr, 381	637	v. Jones, 24 Ala. 420	36, 38
v. Charlemont, 12 Q. B.		Webb v. Armstrong, 5 Humph. 379	429
856	520	v. Fairmaner, 3 M. & W.	
v. Crandall, 7 Mo. Ap.		473	895, 896
233	232 a, 270	v. Herne Bay, L. R. 5 Q.	
v. Cross, 2 Duv. 147	72	B. 642	141, 846
v. Fletcher, 7 Grat. 1	349	v. Hughes, L. R. 10 Eq.	
v. Hensel, 7 Watts, 344	67	281	887, 888, 890, 891, 892

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Webb v. Spicer, 18 Q. B. 886	1036	Welch v. Mandeville, 1 Wheat.	
v. Steele, 13 N. H. 230	844	233; 5 Wheat. 277	526
v. Stone, 24 N. H. 282		v. Welch, 103 Mass. 562	48
559, 603, 712, 919		Weld v. Hadley, 1 N. H. 295	993
Webber v. Blunt, 19 Wend. 188	405	v. Hornby, 7 East, 195	653
v. Donnelly, 33 Mich. 469		v. Lancaster, 56 Me. 453	
20, 361		403, 444	
v. Dunn, 71 Me. 331	571	v. Rees, 48 Ill. 428	165
Weber v. Clark, 24 Minn. 354	900	Wellborn v. Weaver, 17 Ga. 267	677
v. Ins. Co., 5 Mo. Ap. 51	716	Weller v. Baker, 2 Wils. 414	77 a
v. Weitling, 3 C. E. Green,		Welles v. Yates, 44 N. Y. 525	206
441	166, 516	Wellington v. Downer Co., 104	
Webster v. Cecil, 30 Beav. 62		Mass. 64	228
190, 192, 196, 202 a		v. Kelly, 84 N. Y.	
v. Coffin, 14 Mass. 196		543	421, 425, 1008
603, 712		Wellock v. Constantine, 2 H. &	
v. Munger, 8 Gray, 584	343	C. 146	486
v. Webster, 4 D. M. & G.		Wells v. Calnan, 107 Mass. 514	
437	614	311, 314, 326, 608	
Weckler v. Bank, 42 Md. 581	127	v. Cook, 16 Oh. St. 67	237
Weddigen v. Elastic Co., 100		v. Foster, 8 M. & W. 149	412
Mass. 422	953	n. Girling, 1 Br. & Bing.	
Weddington v. Com., 3 Ky. Law.		447	380
Rep. 441	321	v. Hopkins, 5 M. & W. 7	914
Wedlake v. Hurley, 1 C. & J. 83	728	v. Kingston, L. R. 10 C. P.	
Weed v. Beebe, 21 Vt. 495	48	402	128
v. Burt, 78 N. Y. 191	716	v. Malbon, 31 Beav. 48	80
v. Case, 55 Barb. 534	214	v. R. R., 30 Wis. 605	27
v. Page, 7 Wis. 503	736	v. Smith, 7 Paige, 22	887
Weeden v. Hawes, 10 Conn. 50	285	v. Supervisors, 102 U. S.	
Weeks v. Burton, 7 Vt. 67	262	625	453
v. Hill, 38 N. H. 199	394	v. Thorman, 37 Conn. 318	77
v. Hull, 19 Conn. 376	895	v. Waterhouse, 22 Me. 131	242
v. Hunt, 6 Vt. 15	844	v. Wells, 1 Vent. 40	531
v. Leighton, 5 N. H. 343	42	v. Wells, 6 Ind. 447	30
v. Lippencott, 42 Penn. St.		v. Williams, 1 Salk. 46; 1	
474	402	Ld. Raym. 282	94, 478
v. Maillardet, 14 East, 568	687	Welsh, in re, 1 Redf. 238	161
v. Robie, 42 N. H. 316	284	v. Carter, 1 Wend. 185	250
Weet v. Brockport. 16 N. Y. 161	786	v. R. R., 25 Minn. 314	785
Wehrum v. Kuhn, 61 N. Y. 623	533	Wence v. Wykoff, 52 Iowa, 644	719
Weidebusch v. Hastenstein, 12		Wendlinger v. Smith, 75 Va. 309	679
W. Va. 760	208	Wenman v. Ins. Co., 13 Wend.	
Weiden v. Woodruff, 38 Mich.		267	575
130	10	Wennall v. Adney, 3 B. & P. 247	512
Weidner v. Hoggett, L. R. 1 C.		Wentworth v. Bullen, 9 B. & C.	
P. D. 533	800	840	1000
Weimer v. Clement, 37 Penn. St.		v. Day, 3 Met. 352	24
147	219, 260, 290	Wentz v. De Haven, 1 S. & R. 312	
Weir v. Barnett, L. R. 3 Ex. D.		1001, 1032, 1035	
32, 23 ^a	270, 277	Werner v. Humphreys, 2 M. & G.	
v. Bell, L. R. 3 Ex. D. 238		853	12, 714
240, 277		Wesson v. Stephens, 2 Ired. Eq.	
v. Groat, 4 Hun, 193	84	557	107 a
v. Mosher, 19 Wis. 311	947	West v. Cavins, 74 Ind. 265	496
Weismer v. Douglas, 64 N. Y. 91	143	v. Moore, 14 Vt. 447	52
Weist v. Grant, 71 Penn. St. 95		v. Platt, 127 Mass. 367	604
216, 242		v. Raymond, 21 Ind. 305	426
Welby v. Drake, 1 C. & P. 557	935	v. Steward, 14 M. & W. 47	
Welch v. Allington, 23 Cal. 322	954	687, 697, 704	

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
West v. Waddill, 33 Ark. 575	282	Westley v. Clarke, 1 Eden, 357	940
West Branch Bk. v. Moorehead, 5 W. & S. 542	924, 930	Westmeath v. Westmeath, 1 Dow. & C. 519	90
West Chester v. Apple, 35 Penn. St. 284	761	Westmoreland v. Dixon, 4 Hayw. (Tenn.) 223	250
West River Bridge v. Dix, 6 How. 507	1063, 1064	Weston's case, L. R. 4 Ch. 20	593
Westbury v. Aberdeen, 2 M. & W. 267	246	Weston v. Barker, 12 Johns. 276	840
Westerman v. Means, 12 Penn. St. 97	889	v. Barton, 4 Taunt. 673	862
West. Ark. Bank v. Sebastian Co., 5 Dill, 414	1067	v. Chamberlin, 7 Cush. 404	765
Western Bank v. Gilstrap, 45 Mo. 419	128	v. Davis, 24 Me. 374	707
Western Bk. of Scotland v. Addie, L. R. 1 Sc. Ap. 145	214, 241, 270, 271, 279, 285, 286	Westropp v. Solomon, 8 C. B. 345	520, 566, 744, 757
Western Cottage Co. v. Reddish, 51 Iowa, 55	130	Westwick v. Theodor, L. R. 10 Q. B. 224	613
Western, etc. R. R. v. Bishop, 50 Ga. 465	438	Wetherell v. Jones, 3 B. & Ad. 221	364
v. Smith, 75 Ill. 496	206	v. Langston, 1 Ex. 634	814
West. Un. Tel. Co. v. Am. Tel. Co., Sup. Ct. Ga. 1880	437	Wetherill v. Neilson, 20 Penn. St. 448	220, 223, 260
v. Am. Un. Co., 19 Am. L. Reg. 173	437	v. Zinc Co., 6 Fish. Pat. Cas. 50	432, 436
v. Blanchard, 66 Ga. 357, 438		Wetter v. Hardesty, 16 Md. 11	461
v. Carew, 15 Mich. 525	438, 791	Weymouth v. Babcock, 42 Me. 42	997
v. Eyser, 2 Col. T. 141	131	v. R. R., 17 Wis. 550	91
v. Fenton, 52 Ind. 1	791	Whallon v. Kauffman, 19 Johns. 97	553
v. Griswold, 37 Ohio St. 301; 25 Alb. L. J. 190	438	Wharf v. Roberts, 88 Ill. 426	214
v. Meyer, 61 Ala. 158	27	Wharton v. Anderson, 28 Minn. 301	778
v. Neill, Sup. Ct. Tex. 1881	438	v. Birmingham, 37 Penn. St. 371	738
v. R. R., 1 McCrary, 565	437	v. Douglass, 76 Penn. St. 273	264
v. R. R., 1 McCrary, 581	437	v. Franks, 9 Port. 232	756
v. R. R., 11 Fed. Rep. 1	433, 437	v. Hudson, 3 Rawle, 390	755
v. R. R., 86 Ill. 246	6, 437	v. Mackenzie, 5 Q. B. 606	64, 69
Westhead v. Sproson, 6 H. & N. 728	710	v. May, 5 Ves. 27	169
Westholtz v. Retand, 18 La. An. 285	202	v. O'Hara, 2 Nott & McC. 65	297, 520
Westlake v. Adams, 5 C. B. N. S. 248	516	v. Walker, 4 B. & C. 163	723, 840, 857
		Wheadon v. Olds, 20 Wend. 174	181, 753
		Wheat v. Cross, 31 Md. 99	11, 18
		Wheatfield v. Brush Valley, 25 Penn. St. 112	751
		Wheatley v. Low, Cro. Jac. 668	505
		Wheatly v. Williams, 1 M. & W. 533	776
		Wheaton v. East, 5 Yerg. 41	31, 36, 41, 60
		v. Hibbard, 20 Johns. 290	737
		v. Wheaton, 9 Conn. 96	198
		Wheeler v. Board, 12 Johns. 363	742
		v. Collier, M. & M. 123	267
		v. D'Esterre, 2 Dow, 359	887

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Wheeler v. Guild, 20 Pick. 545	539	White v. Baxter, 71 N. Y. 254	505
v. Ins. Co., 82 N. Y. 543		v. Bradley, 66 Me. 254	677
311, 323, 547, 551		v. Branch, 51 Ind. 210	48
v. Kirtland, 23 N. J. Eq.		v. Brownell, 3 Ab. Pr. N.	
13	205, 210	S. 318; 4 Ab. Pr. 162	416
v. Knaggs, 8 Ohio, 169		v. Buss, 3 Cush. 448	
983, 985		341, 343, 345, 362, 363, 365	
v. Mayfield, 31 Tex. 395	25 a	v. Corlies, 46 N. Y. 467	
v. Randall, 48 Ill. 182		7, 15, 22, 719	
214, 269		v. Cox, 4 Hayw. (Tenn.)	
v. Reed, 36 Ill. 81	811	213	119
v. Russell, 17 Mass. 258		v. Crew, 16 Ga. 416	340
340, 344, 360		v. Cuyler, 6 T. R. 176	92
v. Schroeder, 4 R. I. 383	955	v. Dingley, 4 Mass. 433	
v. Smith, 9 How. 55	201	1032, 1033, 1036	
v. Standley, 50 Mo. 509	230	v. Garden, 10 C. B. 919	291
v. Warner, 47 N. Y. 519	575	v. Gray, 68 Me. 579	999, 1003
v. Wheeler, 11 Vt. 60		v. Gray, 4 Ill. Ap. 228	716
935, 997		v. Hancock, 2 C. B. 830	788
v. Wheeler, 5 Lans. 355	443	v. Hart, 13 Wall. 646	474
Wheeler Man. Co. v. Teetzlaff, 53		v. Hass, 32 Ala. 430	698
Wis. 211	576	v. Heylman, 34 Penn. St.	
Wheelock v. Tanner, 39 N. Y. 481		142	149
882, 977, 993		v. Hoyt, 73 N. Y. 505	657
Wheelton v. Hardisty, 8 E. & B.		v. Hunter, 3 Fost. 128	373
232	214, 247, 256, 270	v. Jordan, 27 Me. 370	504, 997
Wheelwright v. Depeyster, 1 Johns.		v. McGannon, 29 Grat. 511	166
471	734	v. Madison, 26 N. Y. 117	1046
v. Wheelwright, 2		v. Mann, 26 Me. 361	
Mass. 447	679	311, 323, 547	
Whelan v. Whelan, 3 Cow. 537		v. Miller, 71 N. Y. 118	904, 905
159, 161, 167, 536		v. Perley, 15 Me. 470	991
Whelen's App., 70 Penn. St. 410		v. R. R., 1 Hem. & M. 786	135
198, 201, 205		v. Sawyer, 16 Gray, 586	270
Whincup v. Hughes, L. R. 6 C. P.		v. Smith, 33 Penn. St. 186	651
78	323, 748	v. Tel. Co., 14 Cent. L. J.	
Whiston v. Stodder, 8 Mart. 95	18	481	438
Whitaker v. Cone, 2 Johns. Ca. 58	421	v. Thompson, 1 Dev. & B.	
v. Eastwick, 75 Penn.		Eq. 493	166
St. 229	220, 230, 260	v. Walker, 31 Ill. 422	1032
v. Hawley, 25 Kan.		v. White, 89 Ill. 460	239
674	318	v. Williams, 48 Barb. 222	
v. McCormick, 6 Mo.		186, 216	
Ap. 114	223	v. Wilson, 6 Blackf. 448	
v. Miller, 83 Ill. 381	677	211, 291	
v. Whitaker, 52 N. Y.		White River Turnpike Co. v. R.	
368	512	R., 21 Vt. 590	1063, 1064
Whitbeck v. Van Ness, 11 Johns.		White Valley Co. v. Vallette, 21	
409	955	How. 414	135
v. Whitbeck, 9 Cow.		Whitefield v. Longfellow, 13 Me.	
266	531	146	144, 150
Whitcomb v. Denio, 52 Vt. 382	284, 742	Whitehead v. Greetham, 2 Bing.	
v. Joslyn, 51 Vt. 79	31, 48 a	464; McC. & Y.	
v. Whitney, 24 Mich.		205	505, 520
486	317	v. Kennedy, 69 N. Y.	
v. Williams, 4 Pick.		462	161
228	856	v. Latham, 83 N. C.	
White v. Atkins, 8 Cush. 367	717	232	1067
v. Bank, 22 Pick. 181		v. Peck, 1 Kelly, 140	469
140, 142, 353, 354, 370, 729		v. Potter, 4 Ired. 257	523

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Whitehead v. Reddick, 12 Ired.		Whittemore v. Farrington, 76 N.	
95	810 a	Y. 452	208, 244
Whitehill v. Lousey, 2 Yeates,		Whittenton Mills v. Upton, 10	
109	537	Gray, 582	137, 142
v. Wilson, 3 Pen. &		Whittingham's case, 8 Co. 42 b	55
W. 405	1001, 1032	Whittington v. Polk, 1 Har. & J.	
Whitehorn v. Hines, 1 Munf.		236	1071
557	103	v. Wright, 9 Ga. 23	74
Whitehouse v. Gas Co., 5 C. B.		Whittle v. Skinner, 23 Vt. 531	505
798	672	Whittlesey v. Delaney, 73 N. Y.	
Whiteman v. Mayor, 21 Hun, 117	594	571	3
Whitesides v. Cannon, 23 Mo. 457	77	Whitwell v. Bennett, 3 B. & P.	
Whitfield v. U. S., 92 U. S. 165	352	559	723
Whiting v. Burke, L. R. 10 Eq.		Whyte v. Ass. Co., cited in Moore	
539	765	v. Harris, L. R. 1 Ap. Ca. 330	569
v. Cook, 8 Allen, 63	823, 834	Wickens v. Steel, 2 C. B. N. S.	
v. Daniel, 1 Hen. & M.		488	822
391	697	Wicker v. Hoppock, 5 Wall. 94	443
v. Sullivan, 7 Mass. 107	707	Wickersham v. Whedon, 33 Mo.	
Whitley v. Loftus, 8 Mod. 190	42	561	936
Whitlock v. Underwood, 2 B. &		Wickes v. Caulk, 5 Har. & J. 36	698
C. 157	881	v. Clarke, 8 Paige, 161	377
v. Workman, 15 Iowa,		Wickham v. Hawkes, 7 M. & W.	
351	343	63	655
Whitman v. Merrill, 125 Mass.		Wicks v. Mitchell, 9 Kan. 80	77
127	291	Widoe v. Webb, 20 Ohio St. 431	338
Whitmarsh v. Hall, 3 Denio, 375		Wieler v. Schilizzi, 17 C. B. 619	560
34, 42, 51		Wiest v. Garman, 4 Houst. 119	159
Whitmore v. Farley, 43 L. T. N.		Wigand v. Sichel, 3 Keyes, 120	290
S. 192; 45 L. T. N. S. 99		Wigg v. Shuttleworth, 13 East,	
151 a, 483, 484, 485		87	338
Whitney, in re, 14 Nat. Bank.		Wiggin v. Bush, 12 Johns. 306	380
Reg. 1	379	v. Cumings, 8 Allen, 353	822
v. Allaire, 4 Denio,		v. Day, 9 Gray, 97	258, 291
554; 1 Comst. 305		v. Peters, 1 Met. 127	895
259, 284		v. Tudor, 23 Pick. 434	
v. Bank, 50 Vt. 388	129	821, 950	
v. Boardman, 118 Mass.		Wiggins v. Burkham, 10 Wall.	
242	223, 229, 560	129	774, 778
v. Dutch, 14 Mass. 457		v. Keizer, 6 Ind. 252	
39, 63		511, 515	
v. Groot, 24 Wend. 82	570	Wiggins Ferry Co. v. R. R., 73	
v. Kirtland, 27 N. J.		Mo. 390; rev'g 5 Mo. Ap. 347	
Eq. 333	429	437, 438, 809	
v. Lewis, 21 Wend. 131	230	Wigglesworth v. Steers, 1 Hen. &	
v. Roberts, 22 Ill. 381	287	M. 70	118, 119
v. Slayton, 40 Me. 224		Wightman v. Coates, 15 Mass. 1	
430, 431, 433		2, 523	
v. Spencer, 8 Cow. 39	604	v. Wightman, 4 Johns.	
v. Sutton, 10 Wend. 412	219	Ch. 343	113
v. Tyler, 12 Met. 190	467	Wilbur v. Flood, 16 Mich. 40	285
Whitney Arms Co. v. Barlow,		Wilby v. Elgee, L. R. 10 C. P. 497	
63 N. Y. 62; rev'g 38 Sup. Ct.		533, 710	
554	129, 136, 139, 140, 142	v. R. R., 2 H. & N. 703	140
Whiton v. Spring, 74 N. Y. 169	945	Wilcox v. Bank, 7 Allen, 270	765
Whitsett v. Clayton, 5 Col. 476;		v. Draper, 12 Neb. 138; 25 A.	
12 Rep. 486	1003	L. J. 209	570
Whittaker, ex parte, L. R. 10 Ch.		v. Howland, 23 Pick. 167	
446	249	149, 150, 467	
v. Howe, 3 Beav. 383	433	v. Hunt, 13 Pet. 378	637

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Wilcox v. Roath, 12 Conn. 550	63	Willans v. Ayers, L. R. 3 Ap. Ca.	
v. University, 32 Iowa, 367	241	133	795
v. Wilcox, 48 Barb. 327	719	Willard v. Buckingham, 36 Conn. 395	269
Wilcox Co. v. Green, 72 N. Y. 17	877	v. Clarke, 7 Met. 435	696
Wilcoxon Co. v. Bohanan, 53 Ga. 219	278	v. Eastham, 15 Gray, 328	77
Wild v. Harris, 7 C. B. 999	324	v. Randall, 65 Me. 81	259
Wilde v. Armsby, 6 Cush. 314	698	v. Sperry, 16 Johns. 121	
v. Baker, 14 Allen, 349		936, 1007	
740, 754		v. Stevens, 24 N. H. 271	220
v. Gibson, 1 H. L. C. 605		v. Stone, 7 Cow. 22	73, 523
214, 217, 238		v. Tayloe, 8 Wal. 557	
Wilder v. Aldrich, 2 R. I. 518	730	495, 518	
v. Cowles, 100 Mass. 487	744	Willatts v. Kennedy, 8 Bing. 5	532
v. De Cou, 18 Minn. 470	245	Willcox v. Jackson, 51 Iowa, 208	282
v. Lee, 64 N. C. 50	206	Willemin v. Dunn, 93 Ill. 511	
v. Weakley, 34 Ind. 181		98, 102, 117 a	
103, 106, 108		Willet v. Willet, 3 Watts, 277	730
Wildes v. Fessenden, 4 Metc. (Mass.) 12	862	Willetts v. Ins. Co., 45 N. Y. 45	13, 16
v. Savage, 1 Story, 22		Willey v. Beach, 115 Mass. 559	92
570, 570 a		Williams, ex parte, L. R. 7 Ch. D. 138	362
Wildey v. Collier, 7 Md. 273	402	Williams' Appeal, 72 Penn. St. 214	1067
Wilduck v. Swain, 34 N. J. Eq. 167	954, 955	case, L. R. 9 Eq. 225 n	246
Wilhelm v. Caul, 2 W. & S. 26		Williams v. Alexander, 4 Ired. Eq. 207	505, 533
321, 606, 607, 901		v. Allen, 7 Cow. 316	823
Wilkerson v. Wootten, 28 Ga. 568	947	v. Baily, L. R. 2 Eq. 731	
Wilkin v. Reed, 15 C. B. 192	822	90, 395	
v. Thorp, 55 Iowa, 609	238	v. Baker, 71 Penn. St. 479	89
Wilkins v. Godefroy, 9 A. & E. 536	729	v. Bank, 2 Pet. 96	603, 712
v. Stevens, 8 Vt. 214	712	v. Bank, 2 Woods, 501	473
Wilkinson v. Byers, 1 Ad. & El. 106 ; 2 N. & M. 853		v. Barnett, 52 Tex. 130	377
494, 521, 523,		v. Bayley, L. R. 1 H. L. 200	144, 147, 151 a, 483
533, 937, 1000		v. Beazley, 3 J. J. Marsh. 577	252, 253
v. Clements, L. R. 8 Ch. 96	552	v. Brickell, 37 Miss. 682	27
v. Gaston, 9 Q. B. 137		v. Brown, 3 B. & P. 69	148
654, 895		v. Brown, 34 Me. 594	47
v. Gibson, L. R. 4 Eq. 162	80	v. Bruffy, 96 U. S. 176	1062
v. Holloway, 7 Leigh, 277	944	v. Carle, 2 Stockt. Ch. 543	399
v. Johnson, 3 B. & C. 428	703, 744	v. Carr, 80 N. C. 294	
v. L'Eaugier, 2 Y. & Col. 363	454	343, 453, 741	
v. Lloyd, 7 Q. B. 27	323	v. Carwardine, 4 B. & Ad. 621	24, 507
v. Oliveira, 1 Bing. N. C. 490	505, 516	v. Champion, 6 Ohio, 169	199
v. Tousley, 16 Minn. 299	454	v. Cowden, 13 Mo. 211	396
v. Verity, L. R. 6 C. P. 206	576, 885 a	v. Davis, 69 Penn. St. 21	278, 377
v. Wooten, 59 Ga. 584	467	v. Evans, L. R. 1 Q. B. 352	943, 945
Wilks v. Back, 2 East, 142	810 a	v. Everett, 14 East, 582	507, 728, 840
		v. Fitzhugh, 37 N. Y. 444	469

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Williams v. Flight, 2 Dow. N. S.		Williams v. Vance, 9 S. C.	344 934
11	1029	v. Vanderbilt, 28 N. Y.	
v. Given, 6 Grat. 268	291	217	327, 328
v. Grant, 1 Conn. 487		v. Wentworth, 5 Beav.	
	310, 327	325	101, 122
v. Griffith, 5 M. & W.		v. Williams, L. R. 2 Ch.	
300	932, 933	294	157
v. Harrison, 11 S. C. 412	41	v. Williams, 3 Green,	
v. Hathaway, L. R. 6 Ch.		N. J. 255	467
D. 544	598	v. Williamson, 6 Ired.	
v. Hathaway, 19 Pick.		L. 281	271
387	684	Williams College v. Danforth, 12	
v. Healey, 3 Denio, 363	581	Pick. 541	528
v. Hedley, 8 East, 378	737	Williamson v. Berry, 8 How. U.	
v. Helme, 1 Dev. Eq.		S. 495	963
151	844	v. Clements, 1 Taunt.	
v. Inabnet, 1 Bailey,		523	498
343	120	v. Freer, L. R. 9 C.	
v. Ingram, 21 Tex. 300	224	P. 393	27
v. James, 15 Q. B. 498	942	v. Gihon, 2 Sch. & L.	
v. Jones, 5 B. & C. 108	349	357	398
v. Ketchum, 21 Wis. 432		v. Henley, 6 Bing.	
	285, 289	299	425
v. Lloyd, W. Jones, 179	320	v. McClure, 37 Penn.	
v. Louisiana, 103 U. S.		St. 402	661
637	1062	v. R. R., 29 N. J. Eq.	
v. Mabee, 3 Halst. Ch.		311	284
500	58, 59	v. R. R., 53 Iowa, 126	414
v. Man. Co., 1 Md. Ch.		v. Sammons, 34 Ala.	
306; 3 Md. Ch. 418	169	691	230
v. Merle, 11 Wend. 80	734	v. Williamson, L. R.	
v. Moor, 11 M. & W. 256		7 Eq. 542	6
	31, 36, 50, 65	Willie v. Green, 2 N. H. 333	737
v. Moore, 9 Pick. 432	768	Willing v. Peters, 12 S. & R. 177	
v. Nixon, 2 Beav. 472	947		230, 513
v. Norris, 2 Littell, 157	48	Willington v. Boylston, 4 Pick.	
v. Paul, 6 Bing. 653		101	601
	384, 399	Willis v. Baldwin, 2 Doug. 450	376
v. Porter, 41 Wis. 422	616	v. Gammill, 67 Mo. 730	504
v. Powell, 101 Mass.		v. Hobson, 37 Me. 403	756, 763
467	284	v. Martin, 4 T. R. 39	651
v. Powell, 1 Ired. Eq.		v. Peckham, 1 Br. & B.	
460	518	515	415
v. Prince, 3 Strobh. L.		v. R. R., 6 Weekly Notes,	
490	87	461	230
v. Protheroe, 5 Bing.		v. Twambly, 13 Mass. 204	844
309	424, 427	v. Willis, 6 Dana, 48	317
v. Rawlinson, 3 Bing.		Willison v. Patteson, 7 Taunt.	
71	924	439	473
v. Robbins, 16 Gray, 77		Willoughby v. Moulton, 47 N. H.	
	810 a	205	285, 288
v. Rohrer, 7 Mo. 556	985	v. Willoughby, 5 N.	
v. Sorrell, 4 Ves. 389	845	H. 244	620
v. Spurr, 24 Mich. 335		Willson v. Foree, 6 Johns. 110	955
	251, 252	v. Willson, 29 N. H. 229	899
v. Tiedemann, 6 Mo. Ap.		Wilmington Coal Co. v. Lamb, 90	
269	442, 453	Ill. 465	718
v. Tilt, 36 N. Y. 319	465	Wilmot v. Hurd, 11 Wend. 584	494
v. Urmston, 35 Oh. St.		Wilmshurst v. Bowker, 2 M. & G.	
296	77	792	878

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Wilson v. Bigger, 7 Watts & S.		Winchester v. Howard, 97 Mass.	
111	119	303	184
v. Brown, 58 Ala. 62	1067	v. Newton, 2 Allen,	
v. Commis., 70 Ill. 46	185	492	580
v. Coupland, 5 B. & Al.		Wincock v. Turpin, 96 Ill. 135	767
228	840, 852, 853, 855	Windham v. Doles, 59 Ga. 265	858
v. Derr, 69 N. C. 137	938	Wing v. Burgis, 13 Me. 111	633
v. Edmonds, 4 Fost. 517	514	v. Clark, 24 Me. 366	317, 869
v. Finch Hatton, L. R. 2		v. Glick, 56 Iowa, 473	
Ex. D. 336	258		654, 810 a
v. Ford, L. R. 3 Ex. 63	92	v. Merchant, 57 Me. 383	
v. Fuller, 3 Ad. & El. (N.			494, 496
S.) 58	270	v. Mill, 1 B. & Ald. 104	
v. George, 10 N. H. 445	756		756, 763
v. Getty, 57 Penn. St. 266	856	v. R. R., 1 Hilton, 235	310
v. Hæcker, 85 Ill. 349	205, 208	Winn v. Bull, L. R. 7 Ch. D. 29	
v. Henderson, 9 Sm. & M.			5, 646
375	698	Winona v. R. R., 27 Minn. 415	558
v. Ins. Co., 27 Vt. 99	551	Winona, etc. R. R. v. Blake, 19	
v. Ivy, 32 Miss. 233	289	Minn. 434; 94 U. S. 180	1064
v. Jordan, 3 Woods, 642		Winpenny v. French, 18 Ohio St.	
	379, 537	469	402
v. King, 23 N. J. Eq. 150	786	Winship v. Neale, 10 Gray, 382	617
v. Kirby, 88 Ill. 566	470	v. Smith, 61 Me. 118	810 a
v. Knott, 3 Humph. 473	311	Winslow v. Crocker, 17 Me. 29	76
v. Little, 1 Sandf. 351; 2		v. Merrill, 2 Fairf. 127	833
Comst. 443	576	v. Patten, 34 Me. 25	670
v. Marlow, 66 Ill. 385	436	Winsor v. Lombard, 18 Pick. 57	
v. Oldham, 12 B. Mon. 55		212, 221, 222, 248, 263, 561, 912	
	103, 104	Winston v. Gwathmey, 8 B. Mon.	
v. Prewett, 3 Woods, 631		19	246
	379, 537	Winstone v. Linn, 1 B. & C. 460	613
v. Randall, 67 N. Y. 338	190	Winter v. Bandell, 30 Ark. 362	242
v. Sergeant, 12 Ala. 778	752	Wintermute v. Snyder, 2 Green,	
v. Short, 6 Hare, 366		Ch. 489	516
	423, 724	Winternitz v. Porter, 86 Penn.	
v. Silkman, 97 Penn. St.		St. 35	76
509	79, 91	Winton v. Cornish, 5 Ohio, 477	318
v. Thornbury, L. R. 10		Wireback v. Bank, 97 Penn. St.	
Ch. 239	751	543	108
v. Wagar, 26 Mich. 452	7, 899	Wise v. Swartzwelder, 54 Md. 292	161
v. Wallace, 8 S. & R. 53		Wiseman v. Lyman, 7 Mass. 286	955
	814, 818, 822	Wiser v. Lockwood, 42 Vt. 720	113
v. Wilson, 14 C. B. 616	776	Wisner v. Bardwell, 38 Mich. 278	483
v. Wilson, 1 H. L. Cas.		v. Bulkley, 15 Wend. 321	740
538; 5 H. L. Cas. 40		v. Chicago, 6 Ill. App. 254	742
	90, 204, 210, 395	Wistar's App., 54 Penn. St. 60	161
v. Wilson, 3 Binn. 557	727	Wistmeath v. Salisbury, 5 Bli. N.	
Wilson S. M. Co. v. Sloan, 50		S. 339	395
Iowa, 367	559	Wiswall v. Hall, 3 Paige, 313	259
Wilt v. Welsh, 6 Watts, 9	50, 52, 53	v. McGown, 2 Barb. 270	
Wiltshire v. Sims, 1 Camp. 258	709		888, 889
Winans v. Huston, 6 Wend. 471	1036	Witbank v. Waine, 16 N. Y. 532	684
Winch v. Keeley, 1 T. R. 619	844	Witherby v. Sleeper, 101 Mass. 138	16
v. Winchester, 1 Ves. & B.		Witherow v. Witherow, 16 Ohio,	
375	246	238	712, 899
Winchell v. Carey, 115 Mass. 560	382	Withers v. Reynolds, 2 B. & Ad.	
v. Latham, 6 Cow. 682	540	882	580
Winchester v. Hackley, 2 Cranch,		v. Weaver, 10 Barr, 391	496
342	836, 837	Witherup v. Hill, 9 S. & R. 11	724

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Withy v. Cottle, T. & R. 78	887	Woodbury v. Fisher, 20 Ind. 387	23
Witmer v. Schlatter, 15 S. & R. 150 ; 2 Rawle, 359	833	Woodbury Bank v. Ins. Co., 31 Conn. 517	201, 206
Witte v. Fishing Co., 2 Conn. 260	140, 141	Wooden v. Shotwell, 3 Zab. 465	458
Witthaus v. Schack, 57 How. Pr. 310	196	Woodgate v. Knotchbull, 2 T. R. 148	738
Whittington v. Bank, 5 H. & J. 489	1021	Woodhouse v. Meredith, 1 Jac. & W. 204	353
Wittkowsky v. Reid, 82 N. C. 116	924	Woodland v. Fear, 7 E. & B. 519	744
Wolcott v. Heath, 78 Ill. 433	453 a	Woodman v. Chesley, 39 Me. 45	647
v. Jones, 4 Allen, 367	1010	v. Coolbroth, 7 Me. 181	677
v. Mount, 36 N. J. L. 262 ; 38 N. J. L. 496	212, 251, 561, 904	v. R. R., 50 Me. 549	680
Wolf v. Beales, 6 S. & R. 242	1012	Woodroffe v. Farnham, 2 Vern. 291	454
v. Howes, 20 N. Y. 197	311, 322, 323, 326	Woodruff v. Dobbins, 7 Blackf. 582	999
v. Lyster, 1 Hall, 146	267	v. Hinman, 11 Vt. 592	338, 339, 509
v. Marsh, 54 Cal. 228	575, 885 a	v. Logan, 1 Eng. (Ark.) 276	42
Wolff v. Oxholm, 6 M. & S. 92	836, 841	v. McDonald, 33 Ark. 97	516
Wolveridge v. Steward, 1 C. & M. 644	663	v. Savings Institution, 34 N. J. Eq. 174	664
Womack v. Austin, 1 S. C. 421	161	Woods v. Armstrong, 54 Ala. 150	360, 365
v. McQuarry, 28 Ind. 103	318	v. Banks, 14 N. H. 101	680
Wood v. Abrey, 3 Mad. 417	165	v. Castile, 6 N. H. 27	1021
v. Bank, 129 Mass. 358	753	v. De Mattos, L. R. 1 Ex. 91	380
v. Barker, L. R. 1 Eq. 139	380	v. Gummert, 67 Penn. St. 136	239
v. Benson, 2 C. & J. 94	748	v. Hall, 1 Dev. Eq. 411	267
v. Bernal, 19 Ves. 220	890	v. Wilder, 43 N. Y. 164	473
v. Bodwell, 12 Pick. 268	956	Woodward v. Anderson, 9 Bush, 624	535
v. Caldwell, 54 Ind. 271	129	v. Cowing, 13 Mass. 216	297
v. Cavin, 1 Head, 506	231	v. Foster, 18 Grat. 200	196
v. Corl, 4 Met. 203	881	v. Fuller, 80 N. Y. 312	869, 898
v. Downes, 18 Ves. 120	426	v. Miles, 24 N. H. 289	852, 996, 999
v. Fenwick, 10 M. & W. 195	42	v. Miller, 2 Coll. 279	267
v. Griffith, 1 Swanst. 43	305	Woodworth v. Bennett, 43 N. Y. 273	357, 452, 453 a, 729
v. Hitchcock, 20 Wend. 47	974, 977	v. Wilson, 11 La. An. 402	6
v. Hudson, 5 Munf. 423	443	Woolley v. Batte, 2 C. & P. 417	771
v. Kelso, 27 Penn. St. 241	463	Woolsey v. Bailey, 27 N. H. 217	877
v. Long, 28 Ind. 314	311	Wooten v. Hinkle, 20 Mo. 290	443
v. McCann, 6 Dana, 366	402	Worcester v. Eaton, 11 Mass. 368 ; 13 Mass. 371	31, 154, 352, 370, 729, 737
v. Mayor, 73 N. Y. 556	842	Worcester Bank v. Reed, 9 Mass. 267	555
v. Midgley, 5 D. M. & G. 41	646	Worcester Com. Exch. Co., in re, 3 De G. M. & G. 180	138
v. Priestner, L. R. 2 Exch. 282	515		
v. Roberts, 2 Stark. 417	1001		
v. Slack, L. R. 3 Q. B. 379	687, 696		
v. Steamboat, 19 Mo. 529	205		
v. Steele, 6 Wall. 80	698, 700		
v. White, 4 M. & Cr. 460	784		
v. Wylds, 6 Eng. (Ark.) 754	930		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Worcester Med. Inst. v. Bigelow, 6		Wright v. McLemore, 10 Yerg.	235 814
Gray, 498	529	v. McPike, 70 Mo.	175 205
v. Harding, 11		v. Meek, 3 Greene (Iowa)	
Cush. 285	630	472	421, 422
Wormer v. Waterloo Works, 50		v. Post, 8 Conn.	142 814, 822
Iowa, 262	1001	v. Remington, 41 N. J.	
Worrall v. Grayson, 1 M. & W.		L. 48	148
166	807	v. Ryder, 36 Cal.	342 433
Worrel v. Pres. Ch., 8 C. E.		v. Tibbitts, 91 U. S.	252 427
Green, 96	16, 505	v. Tinsley, 30 Mo.	389 525
Worsley v. Wood, 6 T. R.	710 593	v. Simpson, 6 Ves.	714 570 a
Worth v. Case, 42 N. Y.	362 516	v. Smyth, 4 W. & S.	527 1029
v. M'Aden, 1 Dev. & B.		v. Snowe, 2 De G. & S.	
Eq. 199	947	321	74, 241
v. Northam, 4 Ired. L.	102 235	v. Steele, 2 N. H.	51 37
Worthen v. Stevens, 4 Mass.	448 707	v. Trainer, 1 Weekly	
Worthington, ex parte, L. R. 3 C.		Notes, 198; 32 Leg.	
D. 803	956	Int. 264	24
v. Cowles, 112 Mass.		v. Vanderplank, 8 D. M.	
30	744	G. 133	161, 168, 284
v. Curd, 15 Ark.		v. Wilson, 1 Mood. & R.	
491	836	207	186
v. Curtis, L. R. 1 C.		v. Wright, 54 N. Y.	437 537
D. 419	357, 456, 726	v. Wright, 2 Halst.	175 695
v. Grimsditch, 7 Q.		Wrigley v. Swainson, 3 De G. &	
B. 479	965	S. 458	266
v. Hylyer, 4 Mass.		Wyatt v. Hertford, 3 East,	147 939
196	669	Wyche v. Green, 11 Ga.	159; 16
Worthy v. Worthy, 36 Ga.	45 113 a	Ga. 49	199, 208
Wrangham v. Hersey, 3 Wils.	274 885	Wycoff v. Longhead, 2 Dall.	92 468
Wray v. Milestone, 5 M. & W.	21	Wycombe R. R. v. Hospital, L. R.	
	777, 999	1 Ch. 268	190
v. Wray, 19 Ala.	522 113 a	Wylie v. Cox, 15 How.	415 427
v. Wray, 32 Ind.	126 104	Wyman v. Fiske, 3 Allen,	238 453
Wrege v. Westcott, 30 N. J. L.		v. Hook, 2 Greenl.	337 723
212	533	v. Smith, 2 Sandf.	331 728
Wren v. Kirton, 11 Ves.	377 576	v. Winslow, 2 Fairf.	398 990
Wrenshall v. Cook, 7 Watts,	464 1021	Wynkoop v. Seal, 64 Penn. St.	361 709
Wright's case, 1 Lew. C. C.	135 185	Wynn v. R. R., 5 Ex.	420 305
L. R. 7 Ch. 55	255, 289	Wynne's case, L. R. 8 Ch.	1002 4
Wright v. Barnes, 14 Conn.	518	Wynne v. Alexander, 7 Ired. L.	
	712, 898	237	633
v. Bartlett, 43 N. H.	548 499	v. Allen, 7 Baxt.	312 232 a
v. Brosseau, 73 Ill.	381 863	v. Callander, 1 Russ.	293 351
v. Brown, 67 N. Y.	1 258		
v. Brown, 44 Penn. St.	224 77		
v. Butler, 6 Wend.	284 760		
v. Crockery Co., 1 N. H.			
281	853, 856		
v. Daily, 26 Tex.	730 944		
v. Goddard, 8 Ad. & E.	144 975		
v. Gully, 28 Ind.	475 244		
v. Hart, 18 Wend.	449 224		
v. Hart, 44 Penn. St.	454 599		
v. Haskell, 45 Me.	489 282		
v. Hickling, L. R. 2 C. P.			
199	926		
v. Howard, 1 Sim. & S.			
190	887		
v. Laing, 3 B. & C.	165 830		

TABLE OF CASES.

	SECTION		SECTION
Yates v. Van De Bogert, 56 N. Y.		Young v. Harris, 14 B. Mon.	556 463
526	141	v. Harris, 2 Ala.	108 245
v. Whyte, 4 Bing. N. C.		v. Higgon, 6 M. & W.	49 895
272	770	v. Hill, 67 N. Y.	162 778
Yanger v. Skinner, 1 McCarter,		v. Hughes, 32 N. J. Eq.	
389	103	372	282
Yeamans v. James, Sup. Ct. Kan.		v. Jones, 64 Me.	563 1003
1882; 25 Alb. L. J. 256	161	v. Lehman, 63 Ala.	519 752
Yeates v. Pryor, 6 Eng. (Ark.)	58 288	v. Raincock, 7 C. B.	310 667
Yeomans v. Chatterton, 9 Johns.		v. Smith, L. R. 1 Eq.	180
295	380		210, 663
v. Williams, L. R. 1 Eq.		v. Stevens, 48 N. H.	133
184	1031		98, 102, 106
Yerkes v. Salomon, 11 Hun, 471	453	v. Young, 7 Cold.	461 77
Yocum v. Foreman, 14 Bush, 494	208	Young Man. Co. v. Wakefield,	121
York v. Gregg, 9 Tex. 85	241	Mass. 9	748
v. Landis, 65 N. C. 535	765	Younge v. Guilbeau, 3 Wall.	636 677
York Bank v. Carter, 38 Penn. St.		Youqua v. Nixon, 1 Pet. C. C.	221 315
446	380 a	Yourt v. Hopkins, 24 Ill.	326 945
Yorks v. Peck, 14 Barb. 644	827, 832	Youst v. Martin, 3 S. & R.	423 168
Yorkshire Wagon Co. v. Maclure,		Yundt v. Roberts, 5 S. & R.	139 338
L. R. 19 Ch. D. 478	360		
Yost v. Shaffer, 3 Ind. 331	282		
Yosti v. Laughran, 49 Mo. 594	254		
Youghiogeny Iron Co. v. Smith,			
66 Penn. St. 340	811		
Young, ex parte, 6 Biss. 53	453		
v. Adams, 6 Mass. 182			
	744, 960		
v. Austen, L. R. 4 C. P.			
553	642		
v. Bell, 1 Cr. C. C. 342	37		
v. Brander, 8 East, 10	809		
v. Burtman, 1 Phil. 203	402		
v. Cason, 48 Mo. 259	211, 291		
v. Cole, 3 Bing. N. C. 724			
	566, 709, 744		
v. Edwards, 72 Penn. St.			
257	239, 654		
v. English, 7 Beav. 10	924		
v. Fugett, 1 Lea (Tenn.)			
447	999		
v. Godbe, 15 Wal. 562	463		
v. Graff, 28 Ill. 20	77		
v. Grote, 4 Bing. 253	1050		
v. Hall, 4 Ga. 95	238, 239, 242		

INDEX.

[THE FIGURES REFER TO SECTIONS.]

ABANDONED CONTRACT, when *quantum meruit* lies, 712.

ABANDONMENT, notice of, when required, 569.

ABATEMENT, of action for non-joinder or misjoinder, 822, 824 *et seq.*

ABBREVIATIONS, explanation of, 634, 639.

"ABOUT," meaning of word, 902.

ABSORPTION OF STAPLE, when void, 442.

ACCEPTANCE, effect of:

acceptance of services or goods may amount to a contract to pay for them,

7. (See IMPLIED CONTRACTS.)

contracts resolvable into proposal and acceptance, 8.

proposal not to bind beyond reasonable time, 9.

when rejected a proposal is exhausted, 9 *a.*

until accepted a proposal may be revoked, but not afterwards, 10.

place of acceptance is place of contract, 20.

time of acceptance is time of contract, 21.

assent must be definite; mere non-refusal is not enough, 22. (See PROPOSAL.)

may be implied from facts of case, 707-9.

ACCEPTANCE OF BILL. (See BILL OF EXCHANGE; NEGOTIABLE PAPER.)

ACCEPTANCE OF DEED, need not be formally notified, 688.

ACCEPTANCE OF LESS AMOUNT, when satisfaction, 997. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

"ACCIDENT," meaning and scope of term, 308-9. (See CASUS; NECESSITY.)

when not preventing payment, 714.

ACCOMMODATION PAPER. (See NEGOTIABLE PAPER.)

ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.

accord and satisfaction is agreement to accept in satisfaction for a debt something received, 996.

acceptance of less amount is no satisfaction without release, 997.

accord and satisfaction with one joint creditor or debtor releases all, 998.

accord without satisfaction no bar, 999.

unliquidated debt for larger amount may be discharged on receipt of smaller amount in cash, 1000.

INDEX.

ACCORD AND SATISFACTION—(*continued*).

- any additional weight turns the scale, 1001.
- anticipation of time or change of place may be sufficient, 1002.
- an agreement to take a lesser amount secured is an accord and satisfaction when security is received, 1003.
- acceptance of third party as security amounts to novation, 1004.
- when other creditors release, composition may be accord and satisfaction, 1005.
- goods or labor may be taken in satisfaction, 1006.
- part payment by judgment and execution may satisfy, 1007.
- payment by a stranger may be accord and satisfaction, 1008.

ACCOUNT STATED.

- where debt is admitted, promise to pay is implied, 774.
- an account may be evidence in favor of party stating, 775.
- account stated proved by parol, 776.
- no defence that indebtedness was merely equitable, 777.
- account stated not conclusive, 778.
- admission must be specific, 779.
- account settled between parties establishes only balance due, 780.

ACCOUNTS, where open to overhauling, 192.

- appropriation of payments to, 933.

ACQUIESCENCE, in a voidable bargain, effect of, 284.

- may amount to estoppel, 6, 202 *a*, 1043.
- in cases of duress or influence, 144, 157 *et seq.*

“ACT OF GOD,” meaning of term, 308. (See *CASUS*.)

ACT OF LEGISLATURE, when barring contract, 305.

ACTION.

- compromise of, a good consideration, 532.
- so of forbearance, 532.
- principal may sue on agent's contract, 802.
- only parties to contract can sue, 784. (See *PARTIES*.)
- for part of claim, 494, 504, 935.

ADEQUACY of consideration, 517, 1001.

ADMINISTRATOR, contract by, to give undue preference void, 409.

- powers of (see *EXECUTOR*.)
- effect of payment to or by, 947.

ADMISSIONS, contract by, 6, 284, 707 *et seq.* (See *IMPLIED CONTRACTS*.)

- evidence of, 774. (See *ACCOUNT STATED*.)

ADULTERY, when relieving husband from liability, 88–92.

ADVANCES for another, when to be paid back, 756 *et seq.* (See *MONEY PAID TO ANOTHER'S USE*.)

ADVERTISEMENTS in papers, contracts in response to, 24, 800, 801.

AFFIRMANCE OF CONTRACT, what amounts to, 282 *et seq.* (See *RATIFICATION*.)

AGENCY, general characteristics of, 96.

- cannot be proved by agent's declarations, 278.

INDEX.

AGENCY—(*continued*).

inferences from contract of, 709 *et seq.*

AGENT binds principal by his statements, 269.

breach of trust by, 435.

cannot make profit from principal, 378, 934.

cannot refuse to account to principal on the ground transaction was illegal, 357.

effect of payment to and by, 942 *et seq.* (See PAYMENT.)

effect of tender to and by, 982.

construction adopted *bona fide* by, will be sustained, 656.

liable to principal in money had and received, 724.

and in account stated, 774.

liable to third party for money he has wrongfully paid to principal with notice, 755.

liability of, for negligence, 1054.

when capable of binding principal by deed, 810, 810 *a.*

binds principal by his negligence, 1052.

liability of principal for representations of, 269 *et seq.*

liability of corporation for, 128 *et seq.*

may recover for advances to principal, 757-9.

may sue in his own name, 810 *a.*

may be restrained from breach of trust, 435.

misrepresentations of, when avoiding contract, 214.

undue influence by, may vacate contract with principal, 161.

debt of, cannot be set off against principal, 1023.

AGREEMENTS.

Constituents of, 1 *et seq.*

“void” and “voidable,” 28.

when infants can make, 29 *et seq.*

when married women can make, 76 *et seq.*

when lunatics can make, 198 *et seq.*

when corporations can make, 127 *et seq.*

how affected by duress, 144 *et seq.*

by undue influence, 157 *et seq.*

by error, 171 *et seq.*

by fraud, 232 *et seq.*

are inoperative if illegal, 335 *et seq.*

when against public policy, 394 *et seq.*

interpretation and construction of, 627 *et seq.*

implied, 707 *et seq.*

parties to, 784 *et seq.*

novation, 852 *et seq.*

performance of, 869 *et seq.*

ALIEN, capacity of, limited, 93.

wife of, when authorized to act as *feme sole*, 76.

ALIEN ENEMY, capacity to contract, limited, 94, 473-8.

INDEX.

ALIENATION, when forbidden by law, 299.

ALIMONY, how far affecting the wife's right to maintenance, 92.

ALTERATIONS.

Material alteration in favor of custodian of paper precludes him from benefiting by it, 695.

alterations are material when tending to benefit party making them, 696.

alterations made during negotiations do not invalidate, 697.

burden on party producing altered writing, 698.

adverse parties not to be prejudiced by alteration, 699.

rule as to negotiable paper, 700.

as to policies of insurance, 701.

alteration by stranger does not vitiate, 702.

so of accidental alteration, 703.

vested rights not affected, 704.

alterations by consent when expressing change of intention start a new contract, 705.

alteration of deed works avoidance, 687.

party by altering negotiable paper makes it his own, 959.

ALTERNATIVE OBLIGATIONS, when impossibility is a defence, 322, 329, 624.

ALTERNATIVE PROMISES.

Alternative promises may be at election of either party, 619.

unless otherwise provided, election is with promisor when mode of performance is alternative, 620.

when election is with promisee, he must notify promisor of his choice, 621.

election limited by its own terms, 622.

election is final, 623.

when one alternative is impossible the other is imperative, 624.

AMBIGUITY, difficulties arising from, 172, 205.

solution of, 627 *et seq.*

may be cleared by parol, 636, 659.

when fatal to contract, 3, 627 *et seq.*

AMBIGUOUS TERMS, to be construed against party using them, 670.

AMENDMENT, right of, as to parties, 822.

AMOUNT stipulated for to be delivered, 898.

ANCIENT DOCUMENT, interpretation of, 635.

"AND," when to be construed as "or", 657.

ANNUITIES, purchase of, not usurious, 461. (See **USURY**.)

ANNULLING CONTRACT, 493 *et seq.* (See **RESCISSION**.)

ANTE-NUPTIAL CONTRACTS, 73, 377, 399. (See **MARRIAGE**; **MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS**.)

ANTICIPATION OF INCOME, clause restraining, 77.

ANTICIPATION OF TIME, how affecting accord and satisfaction, 1002.

APPLICANTS FOR INSURANCE, how far bound to candor, 256. (See **INSURANCE**; **REPRESENTATIONS**.)

INDEX.

APPRENTICESHIP, contract of, 421. .

how to be performed, 872.

effect of conditions on, 613.

when terminable by *casus*, 322, 323.

APPROPRIATION OF PAYMENT, 923.

to follow debtor's intent, 923.

must be equal in insolvent distribution, 925.

third parties cannot exact, 926.

creditor may direct in default of direction by debtor, 927.

limits of his power in this respect, 930.

when priority of debt controls, 933.

APPROVAL, contracts conditioned on, 593 *et seq.*

ARBITRATE, when agreement to, is void, 417.

ARBITRATION, effect of, 411.

ARCHITECT, when arbiter of building contract, 594.

ARREST, threat of, when vacating consent to contract, 150.

discharge from, as a consideration, 532 *et seq.*

ART, terms of, meaning of, 630.

ARTICLE OF AGREEMENT, when merged in deed, 684.

ARTIFICIAL PERSON, nature of, 127 *et seq.* (See **CORPORATIONS.**)

ASSAULT, compounding indictment for, 483

ASSENT, necessary to contract, 1 *et seq.*, 22. (See **ACCEPTANCE.**)

ASSIGNEES.

Assignee by modern practice may sue, 836.

assignment authorizes use of assignor's name, 837.

assignability distinguished from negotiability, 838.

no particular form is necessary, 839.

debtor's assent constitutes contractual relation, 840.

lex fori determines whether assignee can sue in his own name, 841.

assignment subject to equities between assignor and debtor, 842-1025.

(See **SET-OFF.**)

equities to be determined by the law to which the debt is subject, 843.

set-off must be due at time of assignment, 844.

notice to debtor of assignment necessary to protect assignee, 845.

parties may contract to assign free from equities, 846.

so as to orders for delivery of goods, 847.

to a suit by assignee it is a defence that the assignor had first to perform duties exclusively personal, 848.

ASSIGNMENT, form of, determed by *lex fori*, 796, 841.

ASSIGNMENT OF DEBT, when effected by purchase, 952.

a good consideration, 526.

when notice of is requisite to fix debtor, 845.

how to be sued on, 836 *et seq.* (See **ASSIGNEES.**)

ASSIGNMENT OF SUITS in litigation, when void, 424.

"AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," meaning of term, 886.

ASSUMPSIT, action of, 7, 707 *et seq.*

INDEX.

- ATTESTATION**, mode of, 677-680. (See **DEEDS**.)
- ATTORNEY**, effect of payment to and by, 942 *et seq.* (See **PAYMENT**.)
- contingent fees of, 402, 427.
 - when agreement for fees is valid, 427.
 - cannot purchase interest of client, 426.
 - undue influence by, 161.
- AUCTION**, agreement to suppress bids at, void, 443.
- fairness requisite in, 267.
- AUCTIONEERS**, duties and liabilities of, 6, 25 *b*, 255, 267, 443.
- deposit with, may be recovered back if sale is abandoned, 729.
 - effect of payment to or by, 945. (See **PAYMENT**)
- AUTHORITY**, of agent, 269, 375, 810, 942, 982.
- of partner, 818, 946.
 - of married woman to bind husband, 84 *et seq.*
 - of child to bind parent, 512.
- AVOIDANCE**, worked by alteration of deed, 687.
- of other papers, 695 *et seq.*
 - of contract generally (see **VOID** ; **DURESS** ; **FRAUD** ; **UNDUE INFLUENCE** ; **RESCISSION**).
- AWARD**, effect of, 411.
- when agreement to effect is valid, 417.
- BAIL-BOND**, when *casus* is a defence to, 321.
- when imprisonment of principal is a defence, 321.
- BAILEE**, may set up *casus* as a defence, 320.
- BAILMENT**, when demand necessary in, 576.
- may be rescinded for error, 195.
- BALANCE** on account, suit lies for, 744 *et seq.*
- may be recovered on account stated, 780.
- BANK-CHEQUES** (see **CHEQUES**).
- BANKERS**, liability on circular letters, 24-6, 801.
- on deposits, 722, 837.
 - on cheque (see **CHEQUE**).
 - general liabilities of (see **CORPORATION**).
 - appropriation of payments to, 933.
- BANK-NOTES**, when payment in, is satisfaction, 961. (See **PAYMENT**.)
- when a tender, 984.
 - bad, money paid for may be recovered back, 744.
 - suits for the recovery of, 723.
- BANKRUPTCY**, fraudulent, agreement promoting is void, 379.
- set-offs in relation to, 1026.
 - infancy cannot be set out to arrest proceedings in, when infant set himself up as of full age, 54.
 - appropriation of payments in, 925.
 - effect of discharge in, 1068.

INDEX.

- BANKS**, corporate powers of, 138.
 charters of, when contracts under constitution of the United States, 1063.
- BARTER**, effect of, 963.
- BELLIGERENTS**, illegal trading with, 474.
- BENEFICIARIES**, when entitled to sue on contract, 786 *et seq.*
- BENEFIT RECEIVED**, not a valid consideration, 514.
- BENIGNANT CONSTRUCTION**, to be adopted in cases of doubt, 672.
- BETS**, lost, when money can be recovered back, 729.
- BETTING**, when illegal, 451 *et seq.*
- BEYOND SEAS**, when creditor to be sought, 873.
- BIDS AT AUCTION**, effect of, 6, 25 *b*, 255, 267, 443.
 must be *bona fide*, 267.
 agreement to suppress, when void, 443 *et seq.*
- BIDS FOR CONTRACTS**, effect of, 24.
- BIDS FOR CUSTOMERS**, effect of, 26.
- BILATERAL CONTRACTS**, definition of, 1, *n.*
- BILLS OF EXCHANGE**, bind as to strangers without consideration, 494.
 parties may sue on, 836 *et seq.*
 capacity of infants as to, 37.
 law regulating payment of, 875.
 when payable, 881.
 effect of alteration of, 700.
 effect of payment with, 953 *et seq.* (See **PAYMENT**.)
 filling of blanks in, 688-795.
 tender of debt on, 980.
- BILLS OF LADING**, delivery under, 878.
 construction of, 876.
 when passing by indorsement, 793.
- BLACKMAILING**, agreement promoting, void, 508.
- BLANK**, unauthorized filling of, effect of, 186.
 when to be filled in by authority, 688, 795.
 party leaving may be estopped by, 186, 202 *a*, 688, 1050.
- BLOCKADES**, contracts to run, 480.
- BONA FIDE PURCHASERS**, rights of, 211, 291, 347, 352, 376, 732, 734.
 title taken by, 211, 291, 347, 733.
- BOND**, avoided by impossible condition, 329.
 negotiability of, depends on terms, 797.
 of bonds of corporations, 138 *et seq.*
 of infant, voidable, not void, 38.
 when requiring consideration, 495.
 parties liable on, 810 *a*.
 when demand requisite on, 577.
 when assignee can sue on, 797, 836 *et seq.*
 bind only for actual indebtedness, 689.
 effect of when for alternative conditions, 619 *et seq.*

INDEX.

- BORROWERS**, how far protected by usury laws, 461 *et seq.*
by equity from undue influence, 157-170.
- BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE**, conditions of suit for, 323, 545, 606, 882.
- BREACH OF TRUST**, agreements for, void, 435.
liability attached to, 159, 254, 927.
- BRIBERY**.
agreement privately to influence legislature invalid, 402.
and so of agreement to influence executive, 403.
professional services as to pardon permissible, 404.
agreement to influence public officers void, 405.
and so of agreements to bribe voters, 406.
so of sales of public offices, 407.
so of sales of trusts, 408.
so of agreements by administrators to give preferences, 409.
agreement to withdraw from contesting election void, 410.
so of assignments of salary, 411.
otherwise as to pensions, 412.
agreement by public officers to receive private payment invalid, 413.
railroad bargains as to stations may be invalid, 414.
- BROKER**, liabilities of, 453, 707 *et seq.*
when entitled to receive payment, 945.
set-off as to, 1021 *et seq.*
- BROKERAGE**, inferences from contracts of, 709 *et seq.*
illegal contracts of, 453 *et seq.*
- BROKER'S MEMORANDA**, when constituting a contract, 8.
- BROTHER**, agreement for supporting illegal, 374.
- BUILDING CONTRACTS**, when made dependent on architect, 594.
claim for extra work, 708 *et seq.*
- BURIAL EXPENSES**, when to be refunded to parties advancing them, 757.
- BUSINESS**, agreements in restraint of, how far invalid, 430 *et seq.*
sale of, when sustained, 431.
- BUTCHER**, when warranty implied by, 222, 912.
- BUYER**, when to bear destruction by *casus*, 317.
consent necessary to constitute, 22.
- CANCELLING OF CONTRACTS**, when granted, 206. (See RECTIFICATION.)
- CANDOR**, how far required in business disclosures, 252 *et seq.*
- CAPTAIN OF SHIP**, when delivery to is sufficient, 878.
- CARE**, degree of, required of party in performance of contract, 310.
- CARRIERS**, agreement for monopoly by, when void, 442 *a.*
when delivery to is sufficient, 876.
responsible for extortion, 738. (See COMMON CARRIERS.)
- CASUS**, effect of, on contract of, *locatio operis*, 714.
definition and conditions of, 308. (See IMPOSSIBILITY.)
when a condition, 600.

INDEX.

CATCHING BARGAINS, voidable, 169.

CAUSA, meaning of, 493 *et seq.*

CAUSAL CONNECTION required to sustain action for deceit, 242.

necessary to avoid contract on ground of misrepresentation, 213, 216.

necessary to establish duress, 152.

CAVEAT EMPTOR, when maxim applies, 280, 907.

CERTIFICATE OF ARCHITECT, as to buildings, 594.

CESTUI QUE TRUST, may recover balance from principal at law, 726.

when may sue stranger, 728.

when entitled to sue on contract, 786 *et seq.*, 799.

when not bound by engagements with his trustee, 157 *et seq.*

CHAMPERTY, illegality of, 421. (See **MAINTENANCE**.)

CHARITIES, subscriptions to, consideration of, 528.

gifts to, not revocable, 496.

"**CHARITY**," meaning of, under sundry laws, 388.

CHARTER, limitations of, bind corporation, 129.

construction of, 129, 670. (See **CORPORATION**.)

when a contract under Constitution of the United States, 1063.

CHARTER PARTY, conditions precedent of, 559 *et seq.*

excuse for non-performance, 305 *et seq.*

CHEATING.

Agreement to defraud void, 376.

conditions of voidability on ground of fraud, 377.

contract of agent to his private profit void against principal, 378.

agreements in fraud of bankrupt law void, 379.

- agreements in insolvency for preferences void, 380.

party on whom fraud is attempted may avoid contract or sue for deceit,
232 *et seq.*

CHEQUE, effect of payment by, 953 *et seq.* (See **PAYMENT**.)

party losing responsible for, 953.

when to be presented, 953.

tender of, effect of, 986. (See **TENDER**.)

when holder of, may sue in his own name, 836, 840.

CHILD, conveyance to parent valid, 157.

agreements as to custody of, 400.

liability for support of, 64 *et seq.*, 707 *et seq.*

CHILDREN, parents' power over inalienable, 400.

may sue for provision for their benefit, 790.

CHOICE, effect of reserved on alternative contract, 620-624.

freedom of, 145, 174, *n.*

CHOSE IN ACTION (see **DEBT**).

assignment of, 836 *et seq.*, 952. (See **ASSIGNMENT**.)

who may sue on, 836 *et seq.*

CIRCULAR-LETTERS, liability on, 24-6, 801.

CIVIL WAR, when defeating covenant, 319.

CLERGYMAN, undue influence by, vitiates contract, 161.

INDEX.

- CLERKS, terms of service of, 718.
- CLIENT, undue influence over, vitiates contract, 161.
- CO-DEBTOR, when may recover contribution, 765.
- COERCION, when amounting to duress, avoids contract, 144 *et seq.* (See DURESS.)
- money obtained by, can be recovered back, 737. (See DURESS.)
- COHABITATION, inference of agency from, 84.
- agreements for, 373.
- effect of, on separation, 614.
- COIN, tender of, what requisite to, 984. (See TENDER.)
- COLLATERAL MATTER, falsity as to, effect on action for deceit, 246.
- mistake as to, no ground to vacate contract, 194.
- representations as to, effect on contract, 216, 246.
- COLLATERAL SECURITY, inference as to, 954 *et seq.*, 996 *et seq.* (See PAYMENT.)
- COMBINATIONS, ILLEGAL, agreements to carry out, void, 439 *et seq.*
- COMMODITY, absorption of, when void, 442.
- COMMON CARRIAGE, place of performance of, 876.
- COMMON CARRIERS, agreements for monopoly by, when void, 442 *a.*
- delivery to, when sufficient, 877.
- how delivery is to be made by, 871.
- pro tanto* suits by, 715.
- may be compelled to refund extortionate charges, 738.
- may defend on ground of *casus*, 327.
- when may be sued by consignee, 792.
- COMMUNICATION OF ACCEPTANCE, necessity of, 17.
- COMMUNIS ERROR FACIT JUS, scope of maxim, 367.
- COMPANY (see CORPORATION).
- COMPETITION, agreements to suppress, void, 442 *et seq.*
- COMPLICITY, necessary to impute illegality, 343.
- COMPOSITION with creditors, not binding when fraudulent, 380.
- when a consideration, 527.
- when accord and satisfaction, 1005. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)
- COMPOSITION DEED, who may sue on, 784.
- COMPOUNDING OFFENCES, contracts for, invalid, 483 *et seq.*
- COMPROMISE MONEY, cannot be recovered back, 750. (See MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.)
- COMPROMISE OF CLAIM, may be a good consideration, 533.
- otherwise as to criminal prosecutions, 483 *et seq.*
- COMPULSION, 144 *et seq.* (See DURESS.)
- COMPULSORY PAYMENT, when party making can recover back, 759-761.
- CONCEALMENT, when amounting to false statement, 249.
- when imputable to vendor as a defect, 217, 247, 898 *et seq.*
- CONCURRENCE OF MINDS, essential to contract, 4.
- CONDITION, when *quantum meruit* lies on non-performance of, 712.

INDEX.

CONDITION OF BOND, when impossible, avoids, 329.

CONDITIONAL PROPOSALS, effect of, 16.

CONDITIONS.

Definition and Analysis.

A condition is a limitation on an uncertainty, 545.

distinguishable from representations and warranties, 212, 218.

limitation must be as to uncertainty, 546.

contract conditioned on impossibility is void, 547.

while condition is still undetermined, promise is operative though suspended, 548.

promises to pay in future may be conditional, 549.

in Roman law promises are suspensive or resolute, 550.

in our law precedent or subsequent, 551.

conditions precedent may be divisible, 552.

Construction.

Formal expressions of condition not to overrule real intention, 553.

whether a stipulation is a condition depends on intention, 554.

whole contract to be considered, 555.

extrinsic facts admissible to explain, 556.

time of performance material, 557.

when acts are reciprocally dependent, party suing for non-performance must aver and prove readiness to perform, or performance, 558.

Conditions Precedent.

(a) Truthfulness of description.

Representations and warranties to be distinguished from conditions, 559.

description may be a condition precedent, 560.

but this may be waived and suit brought on warranty, 561.

when goods are accepted and retained after due opportunity of inspection, purchaser cannot sue for obvious variance from description, 562.

describing goods as "to arrive" by a ship is a condition precedent; describing them as on board a ship is a warranty, 563.

condition may on part performance be representation, 564.

on sample sales purchaser should have opportunity of inspection, 565.

sale of negotiable paper implies genuineness, 566.

(b) Notice.

When required by contract, notice must be given, 567.

notice of goods "to arrive," 568.

in insurance, notice of loss not required unless stipulated, 569.

guarantors and indemnifiers entitled to notice of acceptance, 570.

and so of notice of default, 570 a.

when debt is conditioned on event in creditor's peculiar knowledge, notice should be given, 571.

whether notice is received is a question of fact, 572.

drawer and indorser entitled to notice of dishonor, 573.

lessor's covenant to repair conditioned on notification, 574.

INDEX.

CONDITIONS—(continued).

(c) *Request or demand.*

Prior demand not necessary to constitute indebtedness, 575.

demand necessary when implied in contract of bailment or other contract, 576.

bonds conditioned on payment on demand require demand, 577.

(d) *Delivery or other action by promisee.*

When payment is conditioned on delivery or completion, this is a condition precedent, 579.

successive instalments may be conditioned on discharge of duty on first, 580.

in executory agreements, conveyance and payment may be concurrent, 581.

but payment may precede delivery, 582.

purchaser may take risk of delivery, 583.

in cash sales delivery and payment are concurrent, 584.

delivery of goods may be conditioned on supply of material, 585.

covenant to repair may depend on act of lessor, 586.

(e) *Discretion of promisor.*

Promise dependent on promisor's choice is invalid, 588.

otherwise if dependent on promisor's approval of goods or work, 589.

and so of contracts of sale and return, 590.

right of approval is not to be capriciously exercised, 591.

(f) *Action of third party.*

Third party may be made arbiter of condition, 593.

building contracts may be conditioned on approval of architect, 594.

subscriptions may be dependent on action of third parties, 595.

refusal of third parties no defence to guaranty, 596.

(g) *Contingent future event.*

Collateral matter may be made a condition precedent, 597.

promise to pay out of a fund restricts to such fund, 598.

bills of exchange may be accepted or indorsed conditionally, 599.

Casus may vacate or institute obligation, 600.

Performance of Condition Precedent.

Impossible condition vacates contract, 547.

performance depends on terms, 601.

fiction of fulfilment of condition when party releases, 602.

and so when such party prevents fulfilment, 603.

and so when performance is waived, 604.

employee prevented by employer from working may recover, 605.

party disabling himself cannot set up technical default of other party, 606.

substantial performance is sufficient, but this must be proved, 607.

Conditions Subsequent.

Conditions subsequent divest title, but not in favor of strangers, 608.

burden is on party setting up devolution of property by conditions subsequent, 609.

INDEX.

CONDITIONS—(*continued*).

- contract may give right to rescind on breach of warranty, 610.
- on contracts of "sale or return" title vests, 611.
- right to determine contract of service dependent upon concrete case, 612.
- indentures of apprenticeship are mutually dependent, 613.
- deeds of separation between husband and wife are revoked on renewed cohabitation, 614.
- forfeitures may be waived, 615.
- on happening of condition subsequent title reverts, 616.
- defeasible title passes to vendee, 617.

CONDITIONS OF MONEY BONDS, when to be enforced, 329, 689.

CONDUCT, contract by, 6.

CONFEDERATE BONDS, invalidity of, 473.

CONFIRMATION (see RATIFICATION).

CONFLICT OF LAWS.

- As to corporations, 135 *et seq.*
- as to infants, 29.
- as to illegal contracts, 361.
- as to place of performance, 20, 361, 871 *et seq.*, 874.
- as to form and process, 796, 841.
- as to laws of *forum*, 631, 637.
- as to insurance, 670, 875 *a.*
- as to negotiable paper, 875.
- as to common carriers, 473 *a.*, 876.
- as to trading with enemy and breach of neutrality, 473–80.
- as to aliens, 93.
- as to time (see TIME).
- as to usury, 461.

CONNECTED LETTERS, to be read together, 665.

CONSIDERATION.

- Consideration is what is done in return for a promise, 493.
- promise without consideration not binding, 494.
- exception as to sealed documents, 495.
- executed gift cannot be recalled, 496, 742, 751.
- distinction between "good" and "valuable" considerations, 497.
- cumulative promise a nullity, 498.
- but agreement for extension or modification not cumulative, 499.
- promise to do what a party is bound to do is not valid, 500.
- question as to promise to reward duty to others, 501.
- agreement to pay public officer invalid, 502.
- so of promises to give extra pay to seaman, 503.
- part payment no consideration for promise, 504.
- detriment or loss of rights to other side a consideration, 505.
- party suing must show consideration flowing from himself, 506.
- cannot recover unless on duty assumed to himself, 507.

INDEX.

CONSIDERATION—(*continued*).

promise against policy of law not valid consideration, 508.

illegal consideration vitiates, 509.

and so of impossible consideration, 510.

when considerations are divisible, illegal or inoperative may be rejected, 511.

moral obligation not sufficient consideration, 512.

party may waive benefit of statute, 513.

executed act not a valid consideration, 514.

otherwise as to continuing consideration, 515.

amount of consideration not material, 516.

courts will not determine sufficiency, 517.

gross inadequacy may be ground to set aside, 518.

consideration utterly valueless invalid, 519.

money paid without consideration may be recovered back, 520.

release of unliquidated debt a sufficient consideration for promise to pay a specific sum, 521.

one consideration can support several promises, 522.

promise may sustain promise, 523.

promise may be contingent, 524.

promise to support illegitimate children good when on good consideration, 525.

assignment of a debt a good consideration, 526.

releases by other creditors sufficient consideration, 527.

so of mutual subscriptions to charities, etc., 528.

fraud vitiates such subscriptions, 529.

so of interchange of patronage, 530.

merely equitable rights a valid consideration, 531.

forbearance of legal proceedings sufficient consideration, 532.

so of compromise of doubtful claim, 533.

so of giving up litigated document, 534.

forbearance of void claims no consideration, 535.

assuming indebtedness of another a valid consideration, 536.

so of marriage, 537.

equity will not set aside executed gift, 538.

in negotiable paper burden is on party disputing consideration, 539.

consideration may be proved or varied by parol, 540.

party claiming under deed cannot dispute, 683.

but may be assailed in cases of fraud, 683.

paid under an illegal contract cannot be recovered back by *particeps criminis*, 353.

otherwise before agreement is executed, 354.

money paid without, cannot be recovered back, 742.

CONSIGNEE, when entitled to sue on contract for carriage, 792.

CONSPIRACIES, agreements to further, invalid, 371, 376.

INDEX.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS AS TO IMPAIRING CONTRACTS.

Object of limitations, 1061.

invalidates state legislation impairing contracts between individuals, 1062.

invalidates repeals by state legislatures of grants of franchises or of estates unless right of repeal is reserved, 1063.

whether exclusive privileges are open to revision is a matter of public policy, 1064.

charters subject to reservation, 1065.

grants to municipal corporations may be revoked, 1066.

laws modifying remedies are constitutional, 1067.

state discharges do not bind citizens of other states, 1068.

marriage not within the limitation, 1069.

and so as to torts, 1070.

tenure of public office may be modified by law, but not specific contracts, 1071.

CONSTRUCTION.

Construction determined by laws of logic, 641.

unsealed contracts differ only in degree from unwritten, 642.

final written contract absorbs preliminary negotiations, 643.

writing may be on its face tentative, 644.

provisional agreements bind until final are complete, 645.

but not if there be no proposal and acceptance, 646.

construction of contract is for court, 647.

so of lost documents, 648.

rule the same in equity as in law, 649.

so as to construction of condition, 650.

punctuation to be followed, 651.

writing distinctively effective compared with print, 652.

practice of parties a basis of construction, 653.

contract to be construed consistently with good faith and legality, 654.

legal meaning, if possible, to be assigned, 655.

probable construction taken *bona fide* by agent will be sustained, 656.

document to be construed according to intent, 657.

but supposed intent not to override words, 658.

otherwise as to ambiguous terms, 659.

customary incidents may be annexed by parol, 660.

parol evidence admissible to explain, rectify, and rescind, 661.

whole context to be taken into consideration, 662.

technical terms to be subordinated to context, 663.

general terms to yield to special, 664.

correlative documents to be considered together, 665.

exceptions to be strictly construed, 666.

specific meaning to be brought out, 667.

mere surplusage may be stricken out, 668.

but not material qualifications, 669.

INDEX.

CONSTRUCTION—(continued).

ambiguities to be construed against party introducing them, 670.

and so as to fraudulent terms, 671.

in doubt more benignant construction is to be preferred, 672.

when there are two inconsistent clauses, the first prevails, 673.

expressio unius est exclusio alterius, 674.

As to construction of conditions, see 553-8.

As to interpretation, see 627 *et seq.*, and see INTERPRETATION.

CONSTRUCTION OF DOCUMENTS, effect of error as to, 199.

that which is legal to be preferred, 337, 655.

CONTEXT, to be considered in construing contract, 662.

CONTINGENCY, conditions based on, 597.

CONTINGENT FEES, when allowable, 427.

not permitted when object is to procure legislation, 402.

CONTINGENT PLAINTIFF, when may sue, 800.

CONTINUING CONSIDERATION, effect of, 515.

CONTINUOUS LIABILITY, time of, 9, 895.

CONTINUOUS OFFER, effect of, 9.

CONTRABAND GOODS. illegal dealing with, 479.

CONTRACTIONS, interpretation of meaning of, 639.

CONTRACTORS, several, when all should join in suit, 819.

CONTRACTS GENERALLY.

A contract is an interchange of legal rights, 1.

parties must be both bound, 2.

terms used must be susceptible of definite construction, 3, 641 *et seq.*

concurrence must be as to the same thing, 4.

provisional concurrence not to be treated as final, 5.

contract may be by conduct, 6, 707.

acceptance of services or goods may amount to a contract to pay for them,
7, 707 *et seq.*

contracts resolvable into proposal and acceptance, 8.

proposal not to bind beyond reasonable time, 9.

when rejected a proposal is exhausted, 9 *a.*

until accepted a proposal may be revoked, but not afterwards, 10.

revocation requires notice brought home to party addressed, 11.

except in case of proposer's death or insanity, 12.

proposer may bind himself to keep open proposal to specific date, 13.

proposal not binding if not continuous, 14.

if not accepted within designated limits as to time and place, proposal
falls, 15.

proposal and acceptance may be conditional, 16.

so of subscriptions to joint enterprises, 16 *a.*

acceptance must be communicated when required, 17.

agreement to be bound on mere posting of acceptance may be implied, 18.

rule depends on terms of proposal, 19.

place of acceptance is place of contract, 20.

INDEX.

CONTRACTS GENERALLY—(*continued*).

time of acceptance is time of contract, 21.

assent must be definite ; mere non-refusal is not enough, 22.

grants under seal may bind grantor without communication to grantee, 23.

general proposal binds as to all parties taking action in conformity with its terms, 24, 800 *et seq.*

so of railway time tables, 25.

so of letters of credit and promises to accept bills, 25 *a*, 800 *et seq.*

so of auction sales, 25 *b*.

from general proposals are to be distinguished bids for customers, 26.

telegrams may constitute a contract, 27.

"voidable" distinguished from "void," 28.

CONTRACTS, IMPLIED.

Proposal and acceptance may be inferred from the facts of the case, but not to contradict written contracts, 707.

from employment of labor, sale of goods, and bailment, 708.

and from course of business and usage, 709.

proposal to guarantee involves promise to pay, 710.

implied promise may be raised when express is bad under statute of frauds or otherwise defective, 711.

when, after partial delivery of goods, final delivery is prevented, vendor may sue on *indebitatus* count, 712.

otherwise when there is to be no payment except for aggregate, 713.

when completion of work is prevented by accident, *quantum meruit* may lie, 714.

contracts of common carriage dependent on completion, 715.

when service is ~~broken~~ into by employer, back wages or damages may be recovered, 716.

but not when this is act of employee, 717.

form of service dependent on circumstances, 718.

special promise to pay not to be implied in cases of friendly and family service, 719.

nor when there is a stated salary or other fixed compensation, 720.

vendee taking land may agree to pay burdens, 721.

CONTRIBUTION, when co-debtor or co-surety can recover, 765 *et seq.*

CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE, when barring suit for deceit, 245.

when precluding a party from recovering back money paid for another, 763 *et seq.*

CONVEYANCE, construction of, 641 *et seq.*

exceptions to, to be strictly construed, 666.

CONVEYANCES, fraudulent, when void, 377.

"CORNERS," agreements for, 442, 453 *b*.

illegality of contracts to effect, 453 *b*.

constitutionality of statutes, 1064.

CORPORATIONS.

A corporation is an artificial person created to facilitate business, 127.

INDEX.

CORPORATIONS—(continued).

- corporations can bind themselves by parol, 128.
- contracts prohibited by charter invalid, 129.
- liable on agents' contracts, 130.
- mere resolutions of directors of, do not necessarily bind, 808.
- liable for agents' fraud, malice, and negligence, 131, 275.
- liable for *de facto* officers, 132.
- representations of agent bind corporation, 133.
- document must be duly executed to bind, 134.
- can only act within chartered limits, 135.
- distinctive practice in this country, 136.
- distinction between usurpation of power and exercise of power, 137.
- corporation may borrow money and issue negotiable paper, 138.
- parties interested in corporation may enjoin it from acting *ultra vires*, 139.
- when contract is executed, party benefiting by it cannot impeach it, 140.
- corporation may be estopped as to *bona fide* third parties, 141.
- distinction between suits against, and suits by, a corporation, 142.
- municipal charters subject to stricter limitation, 143.
- contracts by officers for sale of influence void, 408.

CORRELATIVE documents to be construed together, 665.

CORRESPONDENCE.

- contract by, 14 *et seq.*
- construction of, 665.

CORRUPTION, agreements to effect:—

- agreement privately to influence legislature invalid, 402.
- and so of agreement to influence executive, 403.
- professional services as to pardon permissible, 404.
- agreements to influence public officers void, 405.
- and so of agreements to bribe voters, 406.
- so of sales of public offices, 407.
- so of sales of trusts, 408.
- so of agreements by administrators to give preferences, 409.
- agreement to withdraw from contesting election void, 410.
- so of assignments of salary, 411.
- otherwise as to pensions, 412.
- agreement by public officers to receive private payment invalid, 413.
- railroad bargains as to stations may be invalid, 414.
- agreement to obstruct justice void, 415.

COSTS, effect on, of tender, 972. (See TENDER.)

when to be paid to constitute satisfaction, 967. (See PAYMENT.)

CO-SURETY, when entitled to recover advances paid, 759-765.

when may recover contribution, 765.

COUNSEL, cannot purchase interest of client, 426.

- undue influence by, 161.
- payment to or by, 942 *et seq.*
- contingent fees of, 402, 427.

INDEX.

- COUNTER-CLAIM, practice as to, 1016. (See SET-OFF.)
- COUNTERFEIT PAPER, money paid for may be recovered back, 744.
- COUNTRY, law of, as determining meaning, 637.
- COUPON BONDS, negotiability of, 797.
- COURT, determines construction; jury, interpretation, 647-650.
- COURTESIES, not to be regarded as business contracts, 719.
- COURTS, agreement to obstruct void, 415 *et seq.*
- COVENANT NOT TO SUE, effect of, 831, 1033-6. (See RELEASE.)
- limitations of, 416.
 - of tenant, not defeated by *casus*, 318.
 - to repair, when conditional by act of lessor, 586.
- COVENANTS, rule as to interdependence of, 554.
- when formal acceptance required, 688.
- COVERTURE (see MARRIED WOMEN).
- CREDIT, letters of, binding effect of, 25 *a*, 801.
- sales on, 549, 581-4.
- CREDITOR, consent of, required in novation, 853.
- relations of, as to satisfaction, 996 *et seq.*
 - as to appropriation of payments, 923 *et seq.*
- CREDITORS, agreements to defraud, void, 376-80.
- gifts are void against, 496.
 - releases by, a good consideration, 527.
- CREDITORS, JOINT, when must join in suit, 814.
- releases by, 821.
- CREDITORS, SPECIALTY, priority of, 686.
- CRIME, agreements to commit, void, 371.
- in civil issues, to be shown by preponderance of proof, 344.
 - compounding, 483 *et seq.*
- CRIMINAL PROSECUTION, cannot be used to collect debt, 151 *a*, 483
- et seq.*, 488.
 - contracts to compound, invalid, 483.
- CRITICISM, limits of as to documents, 627 *et seq.*
- CUMULATIVE PROMISE, when a nullity, 498.
- CURRENCY, suits for the recovery of, 723.
- CUSTODY OF CHILDREN, agreements as to, 400.
- CUSTOM, how far to interpret meaning, 637, 660.
- when attaching negotiability, 838 *et seq.*
- CYPHERS, interpretation of, 634.
- DAMAGES, when subjects of set-off, 1029. (See SET-OFF.)
- only interest recoverable on debt, 966, 972.
 - party may recover for breach of contract, 282, 919.
 - and for breach of warranty, 212 *et seq.*
 - but for detention of debt, only debt and interest, 966.
- DATE, construction of, 894.
- when essential, 881 *et seq.*
 - when conclusive as to place, 872.

INDEX.

DAYS OF GRACE, how limited, 875.

of performance, 881 *et seq.* (See **PERFORMANCE.**)

DEAD, burial of, expenses to be refunded to party advancing them, 757.

DEATH, how affecting contracts for service, 716.

when preventing recovery of wages, 714.

when constituting *casus* or necessity, 296 *et seq.*, 323 *et seq.* (See **IM-POSSIBILITY.**)

DEBENTURES, assignability of, 848.

DEBT.

Party compelled to pay for another may recover back, 760.

when admitted by tender, 974-5.

barred by statute, promise to pay, 513.

gambling, cannot be recovered, 454.

what may be set-off, 1012 *et seq.* (See **SET-OFF.**)

of agent, liability of principal for, 96, 269.

DEBT, JOINT, what is to be construed as such, 827.

DEBTORS, JOINT, when to be joined in suit, 824 *et seq.* (See **PARTIES.**)

DECEIT, action of, when maintainable, 232 *a, et seq.* (See **FRAUD.**)

an alternative remedy, 282 *et seq.*

may lie against corporation, 131, 275.

when principal is liable for agent's, 270, 279.

money obtained by, may be recovered back, 730 *et seq.*

by party to marriage, when avoiding, 265.

DEEDS.

Delivery and acceptance essential to validity of deed, 677.

deed takes effect from delivery, 678.

escrow is a deed delivered on condition, 679.

sealing is a solemn mode of assent, 680.

due sealing will be presumed, 681.

sealing imports consideration, 682.

consideration cannot be disputed by those claiming under deed, 683.

simple contracts distinguishable from sealed contracts as to quality, as to consideration, and as to merger, 684.

sealed obligations have longer limitations than unsealed, 685.

no priority to specialty debts, 686.

alteration after execution avoids: filling in blanks, 687.

party executing deeds is bound, though other party has not executed, 688.

common money bond binds only for actual indebtedness, 689.

specialty may be modified or rescinded by parol, 690.

rules of construction the same as for other documents, 691.

capacity of lunatic to execute, 107.

of minor to execute, 29, 38.

of agent to execute, 810, 810 *a.*

mistake as to signature of, 185.

blanks in, 186, 688, 795.

construction of, 641 *et seq.* (See **CONSTRUCTION.**)

7
10.

INDEX.

- EED POLL, who can sue on, 789.
- DEFAMATION, agreements furthering void, 508 *et seq.*
- DEFEASIBLE TITLE, effect of, 617.
- DEFENDANTS.
- Joint defendants must be sued jointly, 824.
 - debts may be joint or several, 825.
 - question is one of construction, 826.
 - debt due on its face from two or more debtors is joint, 827.
 - otherwise if debt is payable individually, 828.
 - debtors may make themselves severally liable to each of several creditors, 829.
 - liability of partners is joint and several, 830.
 - release of one joint debtor releases all, 831.
 - each joint debtor liable for the whole, but on death liability follows survivors, 832.
 - omission of joint promisor only matter for plea in abatement, 833.
 - misjoinder if unamended is fatal, 834.
 - joint debtor paying more than his share may recover from others, 835.
- DEFINITENESS, essential to contract, 3, 641 *et seq.*
- DEFINITION OF WORDS, how obtained, 627 *et seq.* (See INTERPRETATION.)
- DEFRAUD, agreements to, void, 376.
- DELAY, when annulling contract, 881 *et seq.* (See TIME.)
- when preventing rescission, 284.
- DELEGATION, distinguished from novation, 856.
- DELIRIUM, how affecting capacity to contract, 98 *et seq.*, 118. (See LUNATICS.)
- DELIVERY, of thing sold, when a condition precedent, 579.
- how to be made, 870 *et seq.* (See PERFORMANCE.)
 - of deed, 678. (See DEED.)
 - when essential to validity of contract, 677.
 - when essential to gift, 496, 751.
 - partial, when sufficient, 330.
 - place of, to follow contract, 871, 877. (See PERFORMANCE.)
 - requisites of, in tender, 990. (See TENDER.)
 - to common carrier, when operative, 877.
- DEMAND, not ordinarily essential to suit, 575 *et seq.*
- exceptions, 576. (See CONDITIONS.)
 - time of, how determined, 882. (See PERFORMANCE.)
 - effect of, in respect to bills and bonds, 881 *et seq.*
- DEPOSIT on purchase, when it may be recovered back, 743.
- with stakeholder, 729.
- DEPOSITOR, when entitled to recover deposit of money, 722 *et seq.* (See MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.)
- DERANGEMENT, MENTAL, how affecting capacity to contract, 98 *et seq.* (See LUNATICS.)

INDEX.

DESCRIPTION, when a condition precedent, 559-60.

when surplusage, 668.

effect of, in deeds, 633.

DESTROYED CONTRACTS, when to be proved, by parol, 694.

DESTRUCTION OF THING BARGAINED FOR.

When a defence to contract, 300. (See **IMPOSSIBILITY.**)

DESTRUCTION OF THING WORKED AT.

When defence to a suit for price of labor, 326.

DETRIMENT TO PROMISEE, the true basis of our doctrine of consideration, 493, 505, 858.

DILIGENCE, degree of, required of party in performing contract, 310.

"**DIRECTLY**," meaning of term, 886.

DIRECTOR OF COMPANY, undue influence by, over company, 161, 408.

when liable for representations, 277.

general authority of, 127 *et seq.*, 133. (See **CORPORATION.**)

how far resolutions by directors bind specifically, 808.

contracts of, for sale of influence void, 408.

DISABILITY, self-inflicted, no defence, 312, 325, 575, 603, 606, 716, 747, 901.

legal (see **INFANTS ; MARRIED WOMEN**).

DISAFFIRMANCE, when it may go to part of a contract, 46.

DISCLOSURE OF TRUTH, when obligatory, 249-50.

when required in contracts for sale, 906.

DISHONOR OF BILL, notice of, 573.

DISTORTION OF TRUTH, when amounting to misrepresentation, 217, 249, 250

DISTRESS FOR RENT, wrong party paying under, may recover, 762.

DIVISIBILITY OF CONTRACT.

In cases of fraud, 233 *et seq.*

of impossibility, 330.

of illegality, 338.

as to performance, 899.

as to tender, 979.

part performance in case of, 580.

as to consideration, 511.

when sustaining partial recovery, 338, 511, 580, 746, 899.

DIVISIBLE CONTRACT OF LABOR, how affected by *casus*, 326, 714.

DIVISIBLE DEBT, when there may be partial tender, 979. (See **TENDER.**)

when there may be partial recovery on, 899.

DIVORCE, agreements for, invalid, 394.

effect of, in giving business capacity to wife, 80.

whether lunatic subject to, 113 *a.*

DOCUMENTS, connected, to be read together, 665.

parol proof of, when admissible, 540, 648, 661, 694, 803.

lost, parol proof of, 694.

INDEX.

DOCUMENTS—(*continued*).

interpretation and construction of, 627 *et seq.* (See INTERPRETATION;
CONSTRUCTION.)

presumption of knowledge of conditions in, 5, 22, 185, 196, 572, 615.

DOLUS, how related to fraud, 232, 233 *et seq.*

DOMESTIC SERVICE, contracts for, 707, 717, 718. (See IMPLIED
CONTRACTS.)

DOMESTIC USE, provisions to be fit for, 912.

DOMICIL (see CONFLICT OF LAWS).

DONOR, when bound by gift, 496.

DOUBT, to tell against the party introducing it, 670.

DRAWER, when entitled to notice, 573. (See BILLS OF EXCHANGE.)

DRUNKARD, liable for negligence, 1048.

DRUNKENNESS, when avoiding a contract, 118 *et seq.*

DUPE of illegal scheme not barred from recovery, 353.

DURESS.

Consent obtained by duress is inoperative, 144.

distinction between "void" and "voidable," 145.

party or privies may defend on this ground: *bona fide* indorsees, 146.

the danger must be real from stand-point of party threatened, 147.

there must be violence threatened, 148.

duress of goods does not invalidate promise, 149.

nor fear of legal procedure, 150.

threat of criminal prosecution avoids, 151.

and so of criminal prosecutions of near relations, 151 *a.*

must be causal relation between the duress and the consent, 152.

persons from whom the duress proceeds immaterial, 153.

such contracts may be ratified, 154.

DUTY, performance of, when a consideration, 500 *et seq.*

EARNEST, effect of, 729, 743.

ELECTION, to avoid contract, must be made in reasonable time, 287.

to waive tort, when final, 735.

in order to ratify, must be final and single, 290.

right of, reserved in alternative contract, 619 *et seq.*

right of, in respect to appropriation of payment, 932.

ELECTIONS, agreement for corrupt interference with, void, 405 *et seq.*

EMBARGO, when preventing specific performance, 305.

EMPLOYEE, suits by, 707 *et seq.* (See IMPLIED CONTRACTS.)

may be restrained from breach of trust, 435.

sickness of, when a defence on contract, 322-3.

EMPLOYER, when relieved from liability by destruction of thing worked
on, 327.

EMPLOYERS, combinations of, when void, 441.

EMPLOYMENT, when implying contract for labor, 707 *et seq.* (See IM-
PLIED CONTRACT.)

INDEX.

ENDOWMENTS, subscriptions for, consideration of, 528.

ENEMY, act of, when defeating covenant, how far a defence, 319.

when a defence, 94, 478.

trading with, illegal, 94, 473.

"ENGAGEMENT," meaning of term under marriage settlement, 77 *et seq.*

ENLISTMENT, contracts of, 42.

ENTIRETY OF CONTRACTS, when broken into, 233, 330, 338, 511, 580, 899.

EQUITABLE CLAIMS, when to be set off, 1013. (See SET-OFF.)

EQUITABLE INDEBTEDNESS, may be sued on in account stated, 777.

EQUITABLE SUITS AT COMMON LAW, 722.

EQUITY.

Requires reciprocity, 2.

rule as to "voidable" and "void," 28.

will control infants, 51, 54.

recognizes separate estates in married women, 77.

when requiring trustee, 91.

rule of, as to lunatics, 103.

will protect persons contracting when intoxicated, 119.

will control corporations, 127, 139.

will set aside agreements obtained by duress, 144 *et seq.*

also in cases of undue influence, 157 *et seq.*

will refuse specific performance, 166.

will rectify in cases of mutual mistakes, 205.

may rescind in cases of unilateral mistake, 207, 282 *et seq.*, 919.

will relieve in cases of fraud, 232 *et seq.*, 266, 282.

and so of fraudulent suppression, 248 *et seq.*

rules of, as to rescission, 283 *et seq.*

rules as to illegal agreements, 336 *et seq.*

as to restraint of trade, 435.

rule as to consideration, 495.

as to gifts, 494, 496.

as to moral obligation, 512.

will set aside in case of gross inadequacy, 518.

rule of as to conditions, 545 *et seq.*

adopts legal rules of construction, 649.

permits bonds only to be enforced for actual debt, 689.

rules of, applied to suits for money had and received, 722.

rules as to parties, 794.

as to *cestui que trust*, 799.

as to assignees, 836.

as to novation, 852.

as to time, 887-8.

as to appropriation of payment, 923-34.

as to payment to trustees, 943 *et seq.*

as to set-off, 1009, 1013.

INDEX.

EQUITY—(continued).

- rules as to release, 1035.
- as to accounts, 777 *et seq.*
- as to estoppel (see ESTOPPEL.)
- as to custody of children, 400.

ERASURES, effect of on contracts, 695 *et seq.*

ERROR.

General Principles.

- Topic one of peculiar difficulty, 171.
- embarrassed by ambiguity of terms, 172.
- also by confusion of classification, 173.
- will and expression must coincide, 174.

Conscious Error.

- Promises known to be in jest do not bind, 175.
- error, when conscious, exposes to rescission and action for deceit, 176.

Unconscious Error of Apprehension.

- In Roman law, unconscious essential error prevents inception of contract, 177.
- in our own law this view obtains, 178.
- error to be distinguished from impossibility of performance, 179.
- essential error as to parties precludes contract, 180.
- and so as to error as to subject matter, 181.
- no title passes when only bare charge is given, 182.
- no title passes in false personation, 183.
- contract must be made with party suing, 184.
- signature to wrong document does not bind, 185.
- essential error as to identity of thing precludes contract, 186.
- and so as to error as to generic character of property, 187.
- "substantial" error does not necessarily have this effect, 188.
- nor does error as to quality, 189.
- error as to quantity or price only *pro tanto* invalidates, 190.
- if there be fraud as to quantity or quality, defrauded party may hold to bargain and sue for damages, 191.
- error in accounts, and as to price, may be corrected *pro tanto*, 192.
- error in motive not essential, 193.
- error as to collateral or future matters not essential, 194.
- contracts of bailment subject to same rules, 195.
- negligent error does not excuse, 196.
- money paid under mistake may be recovered back, 197.
- error in law does not avoid, 198.
- error in subsumption of facts not one of law, 199.
- special knowledge not presumed in non-specialist, 200.
- error of law, when acted on fraudulently, avoids, 201.

Error of Expression.

- Error of expression unessential, 202.
- party is estopped from denying that his expressions were correct, 202 *a.*

INDEX.

ERROR—(*continued*).

error in time may be corrected, 203.

patent error cannot be corrected by extrinsic proof, 204.

Rectification.

Bilateral error may be corrected, 205.

concurrent error ground for rectification, 206.

rescission granted on proof of unilateral mistake ; rectification on proof of bilateral, 207.

proof should be strong and plain, 208.

contract requiring distinct modes of proof cannot be inserted, 209.

obvious mistake may be corrected by context, 210.

rectification not granted against *bona fide* purchaser, 211.

ESCROW, nature and effect of, 679.

ESSENTIAL ERROR, characteristics of, 177 *et seq.*

ESTOPPEL by fraud, 234.

by silence, 6.

by negligence, 202 *a*, 1043 *et seq.*

by representations generally, 226.

by receipts, 941.

contract by, 6.

of infants, 74.

of married women, 89.

of corporations, 141.

by parties negotiating paper, 796.

by false representations, 234.

precludes party from denying correctness of words used by him, 202 *a*.

how far recognized in Roman law, 177.

EVIDENCE, agreements to suppress, void, 415.

of duress, 144, 152.

of undue influence, 163.

of error, 208.

of fraud, 239, 283.

of falsity, 240.

of illegality, 344.

of conditions, 607.

of lost or ambiguous document, 648, 661, 694.

of deed, 677 *et seq.*

what requisite to rectification, 205 *et seq.* (See RECTIFICATION.)

when admissible to explain document, 202, 661.

of accord and satisfaction, 996 *et seq.*

of release, 1031 *et seq.*

EXCEPTIONS to grant to be strictly construed, 666.

EXCESS OF PAYMENT may be recovered back, 737.

EXCLUSION, when resulting from specification, 674.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS, agreements for, when valid, 437.

EXECUTED ACT, not a valid consideration, 514.

INDEX.

EXECUTED CONSIDERATION, conditions of, 493. (See **CONSIDERATION**.)

EXECUTED CONTRACT, cannot be overhauled for illegality, 352.

EXECUTION, when equivalent to payment, 758 *et seq.*, 761.

when money wrongfully obtained by may be recovered back, 740.

of deed, 677. (See **DEED**.)

EXECUTIVE, agreements to influence illegal, 403.

EXECUTOR, undue influence by, 161.

contract of, to give undue preference, void, 409.

effect of payment to or by, 947.

may be liable at law for admitted claim, 727.

what duties do not devolve on, 323.

when standing in testator's place, 167.

set-off in suits by or against, 1022.

EXECUTORY CONTRACTS, distinctive features of, 50.

EXISTENCE OF THING CONTRACTED FOR, when necessary to contract, 298.

EXPECTANCIES, sales of, when void, 169.

release of, 1034.

EXPERT, may be called to decipher and interpret, 634.

assumed to have special knowledge, 200.

liable for deceit, 264.

EXPLANATION of meaning, how obtained, 627 *et seq.* (See **INTERPRETATION**.)

EXPRESSIO UNIUS EST EXCLUSIO ALTERIUS, effect of, maxim, 674.

EXPRESSION, must coincide with will, 174.

EXPROMISSION, distinctive character of, 856.

EXTENSION, promise for, effect of, 499.

EXTINCTION, by novation, 857, 860.

EXTORTION, how far vacating contract, 149, 737-8.

money obtained by, can be recovered back, 737.

EXTRA-WORK, when suit lies for, 500, 720.

FACT, mistake as to, when avoiding contract, 177 *et seq.* (See **ERROR**.)

FACTOR, effect of payment to or by, 945. (See **PAYMENT**.)

FAILURE OF CONSIDERATION, when entitling to recover back price, 742 *et seq.* (See **MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED**.)

of performance on one side when a defence to the other, 545 *et seq.* (See **CONDITION**.)

FALSA DEMONSTRATIO, not vitiating contract, 668.

FALSE OPINION, not a false pretence, 259.

FALSE PERSONATION, no title passes in, 183.

agreement to effect void, 376.

FALSE PRETENCES, when vitiating contract and affording basis for suit, 232, *et seq.* (See **FRAUD**.)

INDEX.

FALSE PRETENCES—(*continued*).

money obtained by, may be recovered back, 730.

FALSE REPRESENTATIONS, when vitiating contract, 212, 232 *et seq.*
(See REPRESENTATIONS; FRAUD.)

FALSITY to be inductively proved, 240.

FAMILY NEGOTIATIONS, candor required in, 256 *a*.

FAMILY SERVICES, not to be regarded as conditioned on wages, 719.

FAMILY SETTLEMENT, a good consideration, 533.

FATHER, cannot abdicate his rights, 400.

liable for necessities furnished child, 512.

undue influence, over child, 161.

"FAULTS," meaning of word, 229.

concealment of, 249.

FEAR, how far operating to vacate consent, 147, 150 *et seq.* (See DURESS.)

FEES, contingent, when agreement for is valid, 427.

of officers, promise to pay, when binding, 500, 502.

extortionate, may be recovered back, 737.

FELONY, compounding, 483 *et seq.*

how far distinguishable from misdemeanor, 345.

FEME COVERT, 76 *et seq.* (See MARRIED WOMEN.)

FEME SOLE TRADERS, 76, 77. (See MARRIED WOMEN.)

FIDUCIARY POWER, undue exercise of, 161. (See TRUSTEE.)

how far requiring candor, 253.

FIRE, completion of contract precluded by, 308.

FIRE INSURANCES, void when without interest, 457. (See INSURANCE.)

FIRM, contracts by, 807, 818, 830, 1028. (See PARTNERS.)

FITNESS, when a condition of sale, 214, 221, 903.

FOOD, monopoly of, when void, 442.

sale of, when wholesomeness is warranted, 222 *et seq.*, 912.

FORBEARANCE TO SUE, when a consideration, 532.

FORCE, effect of, on contracting party, 144 *et seq.* (See DURESS.)

FOREIGN CONTRACT, jurisdiction of, 871 *et seq.* (See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

FOREIGN COUNTRY, creditor need not be followed into for purpose of payment, 872-3, 991.

FOREIGN LAWS, effect of (see CONFLICT OF LAWS).

mistake as to, avoids contract, 198.

contracts illegal by, 361, 479, 871 *et seq.*

FOREIGN PROHIBITION, when an excuse for non-performance, 306.

FOREIGN REVENUE LAWS, agreements to evade, 445.

"FORESTALLING," 453 *et seq.*

FORFEITURES, not encouraged, 670.

waiver of, 615.

for non-performance, may be fixed by agreement, 890.

FORGED PAPER, money paid for, may be recovered back, 744.

payment by, inoperative, 960.

INDEX.

FORGED PAPER—(continued).

cannot be ratified, 483.

FORM of document, determined by *lex fori*, 796, 841, 874.

of solemnization by *lex loci actus*, 874-5.

“FORTHWITH,” meaning of term, 886.

FRACTIONAL PAYMENT, effect of, 935.

FRANCHISES, effects of grant of, 137.

FRAUD.

Fraud is an intentional distortion of the truth, 232.

party defrauded may sue for damages, 232 *a*.

or may rescind and recover back, 232 *a*, 730.

though not from strangers, 733.

contracts may be divisible in respect to fraud, 233.

false representations may be estoppels, 234.

when both parties are involved in fraud, neither can recover, 235.

when there is fraudulent misrepresentation, good motives are no defence, 236.

false representation must have been with intent to be acted on by party injured, 237.

fraud need not have been *lucri causa*, 238.

fraudulent intention to be inductively proved, 239, 377.

and so of falsity, 240.

reckless misstatement imposes responsibility, 241.

must be causal relation between fraud and injury, 242.

fraud need not be the sole motive, 242 *a*.

injury must be actually sustained, 243.

the losing party must believe the false statement, 244.

and must be without immediate means of testing: contributory negligence, 245.

false statement as to collateral matter does not avoid, 246.

party not bound by third party's misstatement or fraud, 247.

fraud may be in conduct as well as in words, 248.

when non-disclosure of qualification leaves statement untrue, this is a false representation, 249.

non-disclosure of facts which superior business sagacity would discover does not avoid contract, 250.

party suppressing must, to be liable, actively negative fact suppressed, 251.

neither party is bound to correct the other's misconceptions, 252.

nor is a party bound by his silence when not called on to speak, 253.

when there is a fiduciary relation, disclosure becomes necessary, 254.

proposer of business bound to give fair statement, 255.

so of promoter of company, 255 *a*.

applicants for insurance bound to state all material facts, 256.

so with parties to family negotiations, 256 *a*.

INDEX.

FRAUD—(*continued*).

- false promise not a false statement, 257.
- intention not to pay may be a false pretence, 258.
- false opinion not a false pretence, 259.
- and so of conjectural value, 260.
- misrepresentations to be distinguished from puffs, 261.
- false representations of solvency bind, 262.
- and so of false warranty, 263.
- general statement of law does not avoid ; otherwise as to specific opinion, 264.
- marriage voidable when under mistake as to person, 265.
- fraudulent marriage settlement may be set aside, 266.
- employment of puffer at auction may be a fraud, 267.
- vendor may set aside auction sale if bidders were kept back, 268.
- agent's statement during negotiations binds principal, 269.
- false statement in range of authority binds, 270.
- but statements, when contractual, must be coincident, 271.
- statement must be within range of authority, 272.
- reports to principal bind, 273.
- general agent may make contractual admissions, 274.
- corporations necessarily so bound, 275.
- shareholders relieved from contract on proof of fraud, 276.
- corporation liable for agent's deceit, but not directors, 277.
- agency must be established by proof *aliunde*, 278.
- principal not liable for agent's collusive agreements with third party, nor in deceit for agent's independent false statements, 279.

FRAUDS, STATUTE OF, how far precluding parol modification of contract, 661.

whether novation is covered by, 865.

as to performance, 869 *et seq.*

debts not recoverable under may be extinguished by appropriation, 930.

FRAUDULENT CONVEYANCES, voidable, 377.

FRAUDULENT PREFERENCES, void, 376 *et seq.*

FRAUDULENT TERMS, to be construed against the party introducing them, 672.

FREEDOM OF WILL, how far affected by error, 174, *n.*

not inconsistent with doctrine of duress, 145.

FREIGHT, money to be paid for, in advance, 745.

when divisible, 708 *et seq.*

under bill of lading (see BILL OF LADING).

FRIENDLY SERVICES, not to be regarded as matters of contract, 719.

"FROM," effect of, in limitation of time, 884 *et seq.*

FUNERAL EXPENSES, when to be refunded to party advancing them, 757.

FUNGIBLE ARTICLES, rule as to the delivery of, 315.

INDEX.

GAMBLING.

Wagers on matters which ought not be investigated are illegal, 449.
and so of wagers on matters which it is against the policy of the law to have acted on, 450.

by statute wagers are illegal, 451.

in this country tendency is to hold all wagers illegal, 452.

a contract to purchase stocks or other chattels without intention of delivering is void, 453.

"options" not necessarily illegal, 453 *a*.

otherwise as to "corners," 453 *b*.

securities given for gaming debts void, but money paid cannot be recovered back: price of gambling material, 454.

by statute marine insurance without interest void, 455.

so of insurances of life, 456.

and so of fire insurances, 457.

contracts based on lotteries illegal, 458.

GAMBLING DEBTS, when suable, 452, 730.

GAMBLING MATERIAL, agreements to purchase, void, 454.

GENERAL AGENT, power of, 274.

GENERAL TERMS to yield to special, 664.

GENERIC OBLIGATIONS, when impossibility is a defence, 322.

GENUINENESS of text, how to be determined, 630.

GIFTS, cannot be recovered back, 496, 751 (see 164).

may be rescinded for error, 195.

will not support promise, 514.

when sustained in equity, 494.

when executed bind, 496.

"GOOD" CONSIDERATION as distinguished from "valuable," 497.

GOOD FAITH, to be maintained in construction of contract, 654-6.

GOOD MORALS, contracts hostile to, will not to be enforced, 370.

GOOD MOTIVES, no defence to action for deceit, 236.

no excuse when purpose is illegal, 339.

GOODS, acceptance of, implies promise to pay, 7, 709, 716.

bona fide purchasers acquire title to, 211, 291, 347, 376, 733, 734.

no market overt as to, 734.

duress of, does not invalidate contract, 149.

place of delivery of, 876. (See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

price of, how to be sued for, when tort is waived, 736.

sold for illegal object cannot be sued on, 342.

implied contract of sale of, 707 *et seq.* (See IMPLIED CONTRACTS.)

taking without title does not pass title, 292, 734, 793.

bona fide purchasers take title when property is passed, 211, 291, 347, 376, 732, 734.

tender of, 987 *et seq.* (See TENDER.)

when accepted as accord and satisfaction, 1006. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

INDEX.

GOODS—(*continued*).

when payment in, is satisfaction, 963. (See PAYMENT.)

GOOD WILL, effect of sale of, 431 *et seq.*

GOVERNESS, term of service of, 718.

GOVERNMENT, agreement to improperly influence, void, 403–5.

GRACE, DAYS OF, limited by local law, 875.

GRAMMAR, not necessarily to be followed in construction, 662.

GRANTS, in what way to be construed, 666.

construction of, 670.

constitutional limitation as to, 1062 *et seq.*

GRATITUDE, not a consideration, 512.

GRATUITOUS PROMISE, cannot be enforced, 493 *et seq.* (See CONSIDERATION.)

GUARANTEE (see GUARANTY).

GUARANTOR, when entitled to notice, 570.

when may recover contribution, 765.

set-off by, 1024. (See SURETY.)

GUARANTY, impossibility no defence to a suit on, 311, 321.

inferences from contract of, 709.

liability imposed by, 436, 515, 670.

in consideration of forbearance, 532, 852 *et seq.*

contribution incident to, 765.

GUARDIAN, undue influence by, vitiates contract, 161. (See TRUSTEES.)

GUILTY KNOWLEDGE, to be inductively proved, 240.

HEALTH, sale of articles prejudicial to, 222, 912.

personal engagement conditioned on, 823 *et seq.*

HEGEL, his views as to contracts, 1.

HEIR, contracts with, for expectancy, 169.

of infant, rights of, 55.

HENCEFORTH, meaning of term, 894.

HERMENEUTICS, meaning of term, 628.

HIRING OF PERSONS.

Conditions of term of service, 718.

contracts of, 707–718. (See IMPLIED CONTRACTS).

when suspended by *casus*, 322.

HIRING OF REAL ESTATE (see LANDLORD; LEASE; RENT.)

HIRING OF THINGS.

When rescinded for error, 195.

when demand is necessary to suit, 576.

HORSE, warranty of soundness of, 218 *et seq.*

loss by death, effect on contract, 297 *et seq.*, 308 *et seq.*

HOSTILITIES, contracts during, 476.

HOUR of performance, how limited, 885.

HUSBAND, liability for wife, 83 *et seq.* (See MARRIED WOMEN).

undue influence by, 161.

INDEX.

HUSBAND AND WIFE, agreements of, for future separation invalid, 395.
deeds of separation of, conditional character of, 614.
relations of, 76 *et seq.* (See **MARRIED WOMEN**.)
settlements in fraud of marital rights invalid, 399.

HYPOTHECATION of collaterals, effect of, 954, 996 *et seq.*

IDENTITY of parties, error as to, avoids contract, 183 *et seq.*

of thing bargained for, how affecting contract, 177 *et seq.* (See **ERROR**.)

IDIOCY, destroying contractual capacity, 98.

IGNORANCE OF FACT, statement made in, when imputable as falsity, 241.
when ground for setting aside contract, 171 *et seq.*, 732 *et seq.* (See **ERROR ; FRAUD**).

IGNORANCE OF LAW, no ground for setting aside contract, 198.

ILLEGALITY.

General Principles.

Unlawfulness and indictability not convertible, 335.

void contracts distinguished from illegal, 336.

where a contract is susceptible of an illegal and a legal construction, the latter is to be adopted, 337.

illegal stipulations may be severed from legal, 338.

divisibility of insurances, 338 a.

concurrence of other considerations no defence, 339.

party to illegal agreement cannot sue on it, 340.

so of money contributed to illegal purposes, 341.

and of price of goods contributed to illegal purposes, 342.

mere knowledge that supply goes to illegal purpose does not preclude recovery, 343.

complicity and illegality may be inferentially shown, and by preponderance of proof, 344.

no distinction as to turpitude of offence, 345.

complicity in collateral matters not to be imputed, 346.

illegality does not attach *in rem*, or to parties without notice, 347.

landlord cannot recover rent of house to be illegally used, 348.

partnership in illegal enterprise will not be enforced, 349.

insurances on illegal voyages are void, and so of illegal sales, 350.

subsequent securities infected with illegality, 351.

executed contract cannot be overhauled on account of illegality, 352.

complicity does not bar dupes or victims, 353.

money paid on executory illegal agreement may be recovered back, 354.

goods deposited for an illegal purpose may be recovered back, 355.

but not when the mere supply was a crime, 356.

agent cannot hold back from principal on the ground that transaction was illegal, 357.

Violation of Statute.

Contract to violate statute is illegal, 360.

in conflict *lex loci solutionis* prevails, 361.

INDEX.

ILLEGALITY—(continued).

- evasions of statute invalidate, 362.
- not necessary that penalty should be prescribed, 363.
- mere penalty imposed does not make contract illegal, 364.
- otherwise when act is made unlawful, 365.
- party protected by statute may sue, 366.
- agreement cannot be made unlawful by subsequent legislation, or change of judicial opinion, nor can it be validated by subsequent legislation, 367.
- void contract cannot be validated, 368.

Immorality.

- Agreements to induce immorality void, 370.
- so of immoral agreements amounting to indictable conspiracies, 371.
- so as to agreements for libels, 372.
- so as to agreements for illicit cohabitation, 373.
- so as to goods or houses furnished for immoral purposes, 374.

Cheating and Fraudulent Insolvency.

- Agreement to defraud void, 376.
- conditions of voidability on ground of fraud, 377.
- contract of agent to his private profit void against principal, 378.
- agreements in fraud of bankrupt law void, 379.
- agreements in insolvency for preferences void, 380.

Violation of Sunday Law.

- Sunday contracts in some states void, 382.
- statutes do not affect executed contract, 383.
- so as to Sunday transfer of property, 384.
- when statute relates to "ordinary" calling it does not invalidate collateral contracts, 385.
- indorsee without notice not bound, 386.
- parties dealing *bona fide* protected, 387.
- exceptions to be liberally construed, 388.
- Sunday contracts cannot be ratified, 389.
- date may be corrected by parol, 390.
- duration of Sunday determined by statute, 391.

Interference with Family Relations.

- Agreements modifying marriage are void, and so are agreements for divorce, 394.
- agreements providing for separation void, 395.
- contracts in restraint of marriage void, 396.
- partial limitations may be valid, 397.
- marriage brokerage contracts void, 398.
- marriage settlement in fraud of marital rights will be set aside, 399.
- father cannot divest himself of custody of children, 400.

Injury to Public Service.

- Agreement privately to influence legislature invalid, 402.
- and so of agreement to influence executive, 403.
- professional services as to pardon permissible, 404.

INDEX.

ILLEGALITY—(*continued*).

- agreements to influence public officers void, 405.
- and so of agreements to bribe voters, 406.
- so of sales of public offices, 407.
- so of sales of trusts, 408.
- so of agreements by administrators to give preferences, 409.
- agreement to withdraw from contesting election void, 410.
- so of assignments of salary, 411.
- otherwise as to pensions, 412.
- agreement by public officers to receive private payment invalid, 413.
- railroad bargains as to stations may be invalid, 414.
- agreement to obstruct justice void, 415.
- condition not to have recourse to law void, 416.
- so as to agreement to finally arbitrate, 417.

Champerty and Maintenance.

- Champerty is illegal sharing of profits of litigation, 421.
- maintenance is stirring up of unfounded litigation, 422.
- agreement to sell claims on shares not invalid, 423.
- purchase on speculation of suit void, 424.
- parties jointly interested may bind themselves to expenses of litigation, 425.
- attorney cannot purchase client's interest, 426.
- agreement for contingent fees not necessarily invalid, 427.
- barrister can recover for services, 428.
- objection of maintenance cannot be set up by stranger, 429.

Restraints of Trade.

- Agreement to surrender inalienable rights is void, 430.
- agreement binding party not to do business in a particular place may be sustained, 431.
- no objection to such agreement that it is unlimited as to time, 432.
- reasonableness of restraint is a question of law, 433.
- must be valuable consideration, 434.
- party may be enjoined for breach of trust, 435.
- patent rights and secret processes may be sold without limitation, 436.
- parties may bind themselves to deal exclusively with each other, and employee may bind himself to give his whole services to employer, 437.
- agreements relieving from liability for negligence are void, 438.
- agreements limiting prices of labor void, 439.
- agreement not to labor except at a certain price, or for a particular person, is invalid, 440.
- and so of combination of employers, 441.
- agreement to absorb a staple, or to fix prices, invalid, 442, 1064.
- and so of agreement to absorb transportation, 442 *a*.
- agreement to suppress bids at auction and public proposals void, 443.
- agreement to make joint bids not invalid, 444.
- foreign revenue laws will not be enforced, 445.

INDEX.

ILLEGALITY—(*continued*).

intended invasion of home revenue laws does not vitiate contract when this is not the consideration, 446.

Wagers and Gambling.

Wagers on matters which ought not to be investigated are illegal, 449.

and so of wagers on matters which it is against the policy of the law to have acted on, 450.

by statute wagers are illegal, 451.

in this country tendency is to hold all wagers illegal, 452.

a contract to purchase stocks or other chattels without intention of delivery is void, 453.

“options” not necessarily illegal, 453 *a*.

otherwise as to “corners,” 453 *b*.

securities given for gaming debts void, but money paid cannot be recovered back : price of gambling material, 454.

by statute marine insurance without interest void, 455.

so of insurances of life, 456.

and so of fire insurances, 457.

contracts based on lotteries illegal, 458.

Usury.

Usury laws local, and to be strictly construed, 461.

between conflicting laws, that least onerous is to be applied, 462.

law of place of performance controls, 463.

mistake in fact will not avoid contract, otherwise as to mistake in law, 464.

stranger cannot avail himself of statute, 465.

contract not in itself valid not affected by subsequent usurious receptions, 466.

statute cannot be evaded by disguising or reconstructing loan, 467.

statutes do not apply to any transactions but loans, 468.

borrower in usurious contract cannot defend without doing equity, 469.

question one of exaction, not of payment, 470.

Trading with Enemy : Breach of Neutrality.

Trading with public enemy void at common law, 473.

rule applicable to belligerent insurgents, 474.

license validates trade with enemy, 475.

contract suspended during hostilities, 476.

insurance of enemy's ship and goods illegal, 477.

alien enemies cannot sue during war, 478.

contracts for breach of neutrality void, 479.

contracts to run foreign blockades not illegal, 480.

Compounding Offences.

Contracts to compound offences void, 483.

distinction between felonies and misdemeanors obsolete, 484.

approval of magistrate does not legalize, 485.

INDEX.

ILLEGALITY—(continued).

settlement of private suit not precluded by the fact that criminal prosecution lies for same act, 486.

question dependent upon local law of *nolle prosequi*, 487.

criminal prosecutions should not be used for collection of debts, 488.

ILLEGITIMATE CHILD, promise to support, 486, 525.

ILLICIT COHABITATION, agreements to further, void, 373.

“IMMEDIATE,” meaning of, 886.

IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE, when to be exacted, 881 *et seq.*

IMMORALITY not convertible with indictability, 335.

to be shown by preponderance of proof, 344.

agreements to induce, void, 370.

so of immoral agreements amounting to indictable conspiracies, 371.

so as to agreements for libels, 372.

so as to agreements for illicit cohabitation, 373.

so as to goods or houses furnished for immoral purposes, 374.

IMPEDIMENTS, when a defence to a suit for performance, 313.

IMPLICATIONS OF LAW, in construction of documents, 641 *et seq.*

in construction of grants, 666, 1063.

IMPLIED CONTRACTS FOR SALE AND SERVICE.

Proposal and acceptance may be inferred from the facts of the case, but not to contradict written contracts, 707 (see 7).

from employment of labor, sale of goods and bailment, 708 (see 7).

and from course of business and usage, 709.

proposal to guarantee involves promise to pay, 710.

implied promise may be raised when express is bad under statute of frauds or otherwise defective, 711.

when, after partial delivery of goods, final delivery is prevented, vendor may sue on *indebitatus* count, 712.

otherwise when there is to be no payment except for aggregate, 713.

when completion of work is prevented by accident, *quantum meruit* may lie, 714.

contracts of common carriage dependent on completion, 715.

when service is broken into by employer, back wages or damages may be recovered, 716.

but not when this is act of employee, 717.

term of service dependent on circumstances, 718.

special promise to pay not to be implied in cases of friendly and family service, 719.

nor when there is a stated salary or other fixed compensation, 720.

vendee taking land may agree to pay burdens, 721.

IMPLIED WARRANTY, when assumed, 221, 905, 910.

IMPOSITION.

That promisor is under influence of promisee does not invalidate promise, 157.

nor does great mental superiority of promisee over promisor, 158.

INDEX.

IMPOSITION—(*continued*).

otherwise when position of superiority is used to extort unfair advantage, 159. (See FRAUD.)
courts of equity take peculiar cognizance of such breaches of trust, 160.
when avoiding marriage, 265.
rule applies wherever there are authoritative or fiduciary relations, 161.
influence when established presumed to continue, 162.
question one of burden of proof, 163.
when voluntary donation is set up, burden is on party claiming, 164.
gross inadequacy of price may lead to inference of fraud, 165.
in such cases specific performance will be refused, 166.
party's representatives may contest, 167.
such contracts may be ratified, 168.
necessity of heir expectant may conduce to unfair dealing, 169.
extortionate contracts made more open to revision by repeal of usury laws, 170.

IMPOSSIBILITY.

Original impossibility may be either subjective or objective; may be temporary or permanent; may be partial or absolute, 296.
subsequent impossibility may be either culpable or non-culpable; temporary or permanent; partial or absolute, 297.
non-existence of thing at the time a defence, 298.
and so of non-alienability of thing disposed of, 299.
when essential quality of thing promised is destroyed, contract is void, 300.
when both parties know of impossibility this avoids, 301.
if promisor knows or ought to know of impossibility, this is no defence, 302.
otherwise when promisee knows or ought to know of impossibility, 303.
mere improbability does not vacate, 304.
subsequently occurring legal prohibition a defence, 305.
otherwise as to foreign prohibition, 306.
legal impossibility induced by promisor's negligence no defence, 307.
casus is a disaster which due diligence could not avert, 308.
no defence when negligently encountered, 309.
but perfect caution not required, 310.
casus not a defence when the risk is one promisor took, 311.
party making performance of a contract impossible cannot complain, 312.
casual impossibility must be permanent and absolute, 313.
impossibility of delivery a defence, 314.
but not of fungible things, 315.
subsequent non-producibility of goods a defence, 316.
after completion of sale loss falls on purchaser, 317.
covenant of tenant not defeated by *casus*, 318.
exception in case of public war, 319.
casus a defence to suit against bailee, 320.

INDEX.

IMPOSSIBILITY—(continued).

- bail bonds and other guarantees relieved by *casus* or necessity, 321.
- subsequent impossibility a defence to a suit on contract for work, 322.
- subjective incapacity no defence to duty not exclusively personal, 323.
- incapacity for marriage a defence to an engagement to marry, 324.
- incapacity self-inflicted no defence, 325.
- work to be paid for though thing is subsequently destroyed, 326.
- common carrier may defend on ground of *casus* but not of fire, 327.
- when there is an alternative still open, impossibility does not exist, 328.
- bond with an impossible condition is void, 329.
- partial impossibility abates *pro tanto*, 330.
- impossibility may be permanent or temporary, 331.

IMPOSSIBLE CONSIDERATION, vitiates promise, 510.

IMPRISONMENT, how far vacating consent to contract, 148.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT, abolition of, does not impair contract, 1067.

IMPROBABILITY, when a party may insure against, 304.

INADEQUACY OF CONSIDERATION, when ground to avoid, 165, 518.

(See CONSIDERATION.)

when ground to set aside contract, 165.

INALIENABLE RIGHTS, agreements to surrender invalid, 430.

INCAPACITY, subsequent, when a defence on contract, 322-3.

INCOMPATIBLE CLAUSES, how to be construed, 673.

INCORPORATION, construction of acts of, 135.

INDEBITATUS COUNT, effect of, 708, 712.

INDEMNITY, inferences from contracts of, 709.

INDENTURE, effect of, 677 *et seq.* (See DEED.)

INDEPENDENT COVENANTS, relations of, 545 *et seq.* (See CONDITIONS.)

INDORSEE, when entitled to sue on bill of lading, 793.

and on negotiable paper, 795.

rights of (see BILL OF EXCHANGE ; NEGOTIABLE PAPER).

INDORSEMENT, effect of alteration of, 700. (See BILLS OF EXCHANGE ; NEGOTIABLE PAPER.)

INDORSER, when entitled to notice, 573.

when may recover contribution, 765.

INDULGENCE, by creditor, when a good consideration, 532.

"INEVITABLE ACCIDENT," meaning of term, 308.

INFANTS.

Infancy at common law embraces twenty years, 29.

when last year of infancy expires, 30.

contracts of, voidable, 31.

other contracting party bound, 32.

only infant can set up privilege, 33.

avoidance may be during minority, 34.

may hold property and pass title, 35.

INDEX.

INFANTS—(continued).

doubts whether prejudicial engagements are void or voidable, 36.
negotiable paper voidable, 37.
and so of sealed instruments, 38.
contracts of agency not necessarily void, 39.
nor partnerships, 40.
nor suretyship, 41.
nor contracts for labor, 42.
by statute all contracts of infants may be void, 43.
at common law question is one of notice, 44.
infant's lease and other deeds are voidable, and may be avoided by subsequent deed, 45.
disaffirmance of part is disaffirmance of whole, 46.
compensation not required for what has been wasted in infancy, 47.
but cannot inequitably recover back, 48.
other party can reclaim or rescind contract, 48 a.
if taking benefits, must bear burden, 49.
distinction between executory and executed contracts, 50.
disaffirmance of executory contract relieves other party, though it may subject him to a *quantum meruit*, 51.
cannot be made liable on contract declared in tort, 52.
otherwise as to actions not based on contract, 53.
liability for negligence, 1047.
compellable in equity to restore things fraudulently obtained, 54.
privies may disaffirm contract, 55.
for ratification full age is necessary, 56.
knowledge of law is not necessary, 57.
ratification to be inferred from facts; continued enjoyment of profits, 58.
so of continuance in possession, 59.
silence by vendor may amount to estoppel, 60.
vendor's second deed may disaffirm first, 61.
conditional ratification may be complied with, 62
executory contract, when resisted, must be shown to have been ratified, 63.
liable for necessities, 64.
but only for value received, and not on account stated or note, 65.
rules as to negotiable paper, 66.
articles of trade not necessities, 67.
otherwise as to educational or other services, 68.
necessaries conditioned on station, 69.
must be without home support, 70.
services rendered in preserving infant's property not necessities, 71.
money lent not necessities, 72.
contracts of marriage, 73.
may be estopped, 74.

INDEX.

INFLUENCE, UNDUE.

- Mere influence does not invalidate promise, 157.
- otherwise when position of trust or superiority is used to extort advantage, 159.
- influence when established presumed to continue, 162.
- when voluntary donation is set up, burden is on party claiming, 164.
- gross inadequacy of price may lead to inference of fraud, 165.
- such contracts may be ratified, 168.
- necessity of heir expectant may conduce to unfair dealing, 169.

INJUNCTION, when a defence to a suit for a specific performance, 305.

- may be obtained for contracts *ultra vires*, 139.

INJURY, must be sustained in order to support action for deceit, 243.

INQUISITION, how far evidence of insanity, 123.

IN REM, illegality does not follow, 347.

INSANITY, how affecting capacity to contract, 98 *et seq.* (See LUNATICS.)

- how affecting liability for negligence, 1048.
- how far to be regarded as relieving a party from an obligation, 311.

INSOLVENCY, FRAUDULENT, constituents of, 377.

- agreements to effect, void, 380.
- set-offs in relation to, 1026.

INSOLVENCY OF PURCHASER, when rescinding contract, 293.

INSOLVENT, promise to pay debts by, 513.

INSOLVENT ASSIGNEE, when affected by assignor's equities, 1026 *et seq.* (See SET-OFF.)

INSOLVENT DISCHARGES by state, how affected by constitution of the United States, 1068.

INSOLVENT DISTRIBUTION, appropriation of payments in, 924.

INSOLVENT LAWS, agreements in fraud of, void, 380.

INSTALMENT, failure in performance of, when entitling to rescission, 293, 580.

- when agreement for delivery or payment by, is repudiated, *quantum meruit* may be sustained, 712, 899.

INSTITOR, liability of, 1048 *n.*

INSURANCE, applicants for, how far bound to candor, 256.

- contracts of, construction of, 311, 670, 875 *a.*
- effect of alteration of, 701.
- novation in, 862.
- when interest required to validate, 451, 455.
- when ship turns out to be lost, 298 *et seq.*
- place of performance of, 875 *a.*
- when there should be notice of loss, 569.
- payment of premium is a condition precedent, 547.
- wagering, when illegal, 455.
- policy, when divisible, 338 *a.*
- when illegal, are void, 350.
- how affected by war, 319, 547.
- of enemy's property, illegal, 477.

INDEX.

INSURANCE, LIFE, not revived by payment after party's death, 298.

how affected by insanity of insured, 547.

void, when without interest, 451.

INSURGENTS, illegal trading with, 474.

INTELLECTUAL DISPARITY, no cause for avoiding contract, 158.

INTENTION, how to be interpreted, 627 *et seq.* (See **INTERPRETATION** ;
CONSTRUCTION.)

to be carried out in construction, 174, 657.

to be inductively proved, 239.

necessary to sustain action for deceit, 237.

necessary to transfer of title, 292.

INTENTION NOT TO PAY, when a false pretence, 258.

INTEREST, laws regulating, 461 *et seq.*

stopped by a refused tender, 972. (See **TENDER.**)

when to be paid to constitute satisfaction, 966-7.

INTERLINEATIONS, effect of on contracts, 698 *et seq.*

INTERPRETATION.

Distinction between construction and interpretation, 627.

classification of interpretation, 628.

genuineness of text to be first established, 629.

terms of art and business to be explained by parol, 630.

meaning of terms of art or business is for jury ; construction of meaning
is for court, 631.

accepted legal meaning of words to be received, 632.

descriptive words are to yield to fixed natural objects, as well as to con-
struction, 633.

ciphers and abbreviations may be explained by experts, 634.

sense intended at the time must be adopted, 635.

but not (unless in cases of mutual mistake) to override writing, 636.

place in subordination to whose idioms a word is used, to determine mean-
ing, 637, 874.

in informal documents plain meaning not to be postponed to technical, 638.

in memoranda and private letters allowance to be made for individual
characteristics, 639.

nomen generalissimum to be largely defined, 640.

as to construction, see 641 *et seq.* ; and see **CONSTRUCTION.**

INTIMIDATION, consent obtained by, when inoperative, 144 *et seq.* (See
DURESS.)

INTOXICATING LIQUORS, illegal sale of, 342-3, 348.

law of place of performance determines, 361, 871.

INTOXICATION, when avoiding a contract, 118 *et seq.*

I. O. U., meaning of, 639.

IRRELIGION, contracts to promote void, 370.

JEST, promises made in, effect of, 175.

JOB, contracts for, how affected by accident, 714, 716.

INDEX.

JOINT AGENCY, relation of parties to, 814 *et seq.*, 942 *et seq.*

JOINT CONTRACTS, obligations of, 815.

survivorship of, 819, 832. (See **JOINT PARTIES**.)

release of one debtor releases all, 831.

set-off in relation to, 1021.

JOINT CREDITOR, effect of receipt by, 950.

JOINT DEBT, released by accord and satisfaction by one joint creditor or
with one joint debtor, 998.

JOINT DEBTOR, effect of payment by, 949.

JOINT DEPOSIT, must be drawn out on joint order, 951.

JOINT PARTIES.

All joint promisees must join, 814.

otherwise when creditors are several, 815.

question one of construction and parol explanation, 816.

plaintiffs cannot sue both jointly and severally, 817.

all partners should join, 818.

qualification as to one of several contractors suing contractually, 819.

on death of joint promisee debt survives, 820.

one joint promisee may release, 821.

non-joinder of plaintiffs unless amended is fatal, 822.

unamended misjoinder of plaintiffs is fatal if inconsistent with cause of
action, 823.

joint defendants must be sued jointly, 824.

debts may be joint or several, 825.

question is one of construction, 826.

debt due on its face from two or more debtors is joint, 827.

otherwise if debt is payable individually, 828.

debtors may make themselves severally liable to each of several creditors,
829.

liability of partners is joint and several, 830.

release of one joint debtor releases all, 831.

each joint debtor liable for the whole, but on death liability follows sur-
vivors, 832.

omission of joint promisor only matter for plea in abatement, 833.

misjoinder if unamended is fatal, 834.

joint debtor paying more than his share may recover from others, 835.

JUDGMENT, for part, when absorbing the whole debt, 936, 937, 1014.

set-off in respect to, 1017 *et seq.*

when plea of, prevails, 936.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS, agreements to pervert, void, 415.

JURISDICTION, as to foreign contract (see **CONFLICT OF LAWS**).

as to debtor beyond seas, 873.

JURY, province of, in interpreting, 627 *et seq.*, 647.

as to questions of fraud, 239, 377.

as to alterations, 696 *et seq.*

JUSTICE, obstruction of, agreements to affect, void, 415.

INDEX.

- KANT**, his views as to contracts, 1.
- KINDNESS** received, not a valid consideration, 514.
- KNOWLEDGE**, to be inductively proved, 240.
of future illegality does not necessarily avoid, 343.
of impossibility, when to be imputed to contracting party, 302.
- LABOR**, agreements fixing price of, when void, 439.
agreements restraining, how far invalid, 430 *et seq.*
contract for, when defeated by *casus*, 322.
implied contract for, 707 *et seq.* (See IMPLIED CONTRACTS.)
limitations of, when void, 439 *et seq.*
when accord and satisfaction, 1006. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)
- LABORER**, when entitled to provide a substitute, 322-3.
- LACHES**, when precluding rescission, 286.
effect of, in barring right, 286, 312, 325, 603, 661, 716, 747, 901, 995.
- LANDLORD**, cannot recover on rent of house to be illegally used, 349.
implied contracts, 708.
must pay back money tenant has been compelled to pay in his behalf, 762.
when to be notified of want of repair, 574.
duties of, as to eviction by *casus* or superior force, 308, 318 *et seq.*
- LANGUAGE**, error as to use of, effect of, 202, 601, 628, 661, 803, 1043.
- LATENT AMBIGUITY**, may be cleared by parol, 205.
- LAW**, mistake as to, does not avoid contract, 198.
otherwise as to subsumption of facts in law, 199.
and otherwise as to foreign law, 198.
- LAW, CONFLICT OF** (see CONFLICT OF LAWS).
- LAW, FOREIGN** (see FOREIGN LAW).
- LAW MERCHANT**, rule as to negotiable paper, 494, 700, 838, 881, 953.
- LEASE**, for illegal purposes, cannot be enforced, 348.
when implied, 708.
when defeated by *casus*, 318.
conditions in, 545 *et seq.*
of infant, when voidable, 45.
when there should be notice of repair, 574. (See LANDLORD.)
- LEGACY**, when executor liable for, on money had and received, 727.
- LEGAL PROCESS**, money obtained by, cannot be recovered back, 740.
- LEGAL PROHIBITION**, when constituting impossibility, 305.
- LEGAL TENDER**, what is, 961, 984.
- LEGALITY**, to be maintained in construction of contract, 654.
- LEGISLATION**, agreements to corrupt illegal, 402.
contract hostile to, is invalid, 360.
- LESSOR**, when entitled to notice, 574.
where to be paid, 873.
- LETTERS**, contract by, 5.
meaning of, how determined, 637 *et seq.* (See INTERPRETATION.)

INDEX.

LETTERS—(*continued*).

when payment by, is good, 962.

when connected, to be read together, 665.

LETTERS OF CREDIT, binding effect of, 25 *a*, 801.

LEX FORI, determines limits of set-off, 1009. (See SET-OFF.)

determines as to appropriation to debts, 930.

determines whether assignee can sue, 841, 874.

determines in all questions where home law is peremptory, 874.

LEX LOCI CONTRACTUS, effect of, on contract, 20. (See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

LEX LOCI SOLUTIONIS, effect of, on contract, 20, 361, 463, 871, 874.
(See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

LIBEL, contract to publish, void, 372.

LIBERTY, agreement to surrender, void, 430.

LICENSE, to trade with alien enemy, 94, 475-8.

LIEN, MARITIME, when party paying may be reimbursed, 764 *et seq.*

LIFE, continuance of, when a condition to a personal obligation, 320, 323
et seq.

LIFE INSURANCES, void when without interest, 456.

how affected by insanity of insured, 547.

by payment of premium after death, 298.

LIMITATION, as to sealed documents, 685.

debts outlawed by statute may be revived by promise, 513.

effect of, on set-off, 1018.

on appropriation of payment, 930.

LIMITATION OF MARRIAGE, agreements for, invalid, 396.

LIMITATIONS, distinguishable from conditions, 545.

statute of, under constitution of the United States, 1067.

LIMITED LIABILITY, when imposed by statute, 367.

LIQUIDATED DAMAGES, cannot be extinguished on part payment,
936-7, 1000.

LIQUOR, SPIRITOUS, illegal sale of, 342-3, 361.

LITERAL MEANING, when to be given to words, 202, 601, 628 *et seq.*,
661, 803.

LITIGATION, agreements to suppress or to promote, when void, 416-7, 421
et seq.

compromise of, a good consideration, 533-5.

LOAN, for illegal purpose, cannot be sued on, 341.

usurious, effect of, 461 *et seq.*

to infant, 31 *et seq.*

to married woman, 77 *a*.

LOCAL MEANING, when to be followed, 637.

LOCALITY of performance, 871 *et seq.* (See CONFLICT OF LAWS; LEX
LocI.)

LOCATIO OPERARUM, defeated by *casus*, 322.

LOCATIO OPERIS, effect of *casus* on, 714.

INDEX.

LOGIC, laws of, as bearing on construction, 641.

LOG-ROLLING, agreements for, 407.

"LORD'S DAY" (see SUNDAY).

LOSS, notice of, when required in insurance, 569. (See INSURANCE.)

LOSS OF RIGHTS BY PROMISEE essential to consideration, 505.

LOSS OF THING BARGAINED FOR, when defence to suit on contract, 298 *et seq.*

when ground for suit for price paid, 745.

LOST ARTICLES, effect of offers of rewards for, 24.

LOST CONTRACTS, may be enforced on parol proof, 694. (See PAROL.)

LOST DOCUMENT, to be proved by parol, 648, 694.

LOTTERIES, illegality of contracts based on, 458.

"LOVE AND AFFECTION," how far a consideration, 494.

LUCID INTERVALS, effect of, with lunatics, 109.

LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS, definition of, 1, n.

LUCRI CAUSA, not necessary to fraud, 238.

LUNATICS.

Total mental incapacity precludes contract, 98.

by early authorities lunacy not generally ground for avoidance, 99.

subsequent tendency to hold such contracts void, 100.

exception as to necessities, 101.

prevalent view now is that where there is capacity there is liability; but

that contract is voidable when made with party with notice, 102.

question conditioned by fraud, 103.

and by undue influence, 104.

notice to be inferred from facts, 105.

contracts bind when fair and beneficial, 106.

exception as to deeds, 107.

lunatic may take title, 107 *a.*

and may transfer title and may endorse, 108.

may be liable for negligence, 1048.

business capacity restored in lucid intervals, 109.

monomania does not avoid contracts on other topics, 110.

on rescinding contract parties to be placed in *statu quo*, 111.

partnership contracts of lunatics voidable, 112.

distinctive rule as to marriage contracts, 113.

distinctive rule as to divorce, 113 *a.*

party may himself avoid contract on ground of mental incompetency, 114.

and so of his administrator, 115.

and so of guardian and assignee, 116.

other contracting party cannot avoid, 117.

non-repudiation may be ratification, 117 *a.*

mere intoxication no ground for holding contract void, 118.

otherwise when there is fraud, 119.

ratification to be inductively shown, 120.

INDEX.

LUNATICS—(*continued*).

- no defence in action for necessities, 121.
- legal expenses may be necessities, 122.
- inquisition *prima facie* evidence of incompetency, 123.
- spendthrifts may be incapacitated by local statute, 124.

MAIL, communication of acceptance by, 18.

- forwarding of payment by, 962.

MAINTENANCE OF LITIGATION.

- Maintenance is stirring up of unfounded litigation, 422.
- agreement to sell claims on shares not invalid, 423.
- purchase on speculation of suit void, 424.
- parties jointly interested may bind themselves to expenses of litigation, 425.
- attorney cannot purchase client's interest, 426.
- agreement for contingent fees not necessarily invalid, 427.
- barrister can recover for services, 428.
- objection of maintenance cannot be set up by stranger, 429.

MAINTENANCE OF WIFE, husband bound for, 86-92.

MALA IN SE and MALA PROHIBITA, distinction as to, 345.

MANUFACTURER, sale by, how far including warranty, 221.

MARINE INSURANCES, void when without interest, 455. (See generally INSURANCE.)

MARINER, promise of extra pay to, void, 503.

MARITAL RIGHTS, settlement in fraud of, invalid, 399.

MARITIME LIENS, when party paying may be reimbursed, 764.

MARKET, agreement to monopolize, void, 442.

- limitations of, when void, 439 *et seq.*

MARKET OVERT, not recognized in this country, 734.

MARRIAGE, agreements modifying, are void, 394.

- agreements providing for separation void, 395.
- contracts in restraint of, void, 396.
- partial limitations may be valid, 397.
- capacity of infants for, 73-4.
- capacity of lunatics for, 113.
- duties of, as to children, cannot be modified by contract, 400.
- voidable when made under mistake of person, 265.
- when made fraudulently, 265.
- a valuable consideration, 377, 537.

MARRIAGE BROKERAGE, contracts for, void, 398.

MARRIAGE ENGAGEMENT, personal incapacity a defence to, 323-4.

- party disabling himself cannot set up this defence, 324, 606, 885 *a.*
- in such case no demand is necessary, 575, 606.
- to be performed within reasonable time, 882.

MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS by infant are voidable, 73.

- what is a consideration for, 377.
- in fraud of marital rights invalid, 399.

INDEX.

MARRIED WOMEN.

At common law, married women, with certain limitations, cannot contract, 76.

but woman with separate estate may bind such estate, 77.

may contract for services, but not for goods or money, 77 *a*.

cannot bind future acquired estate, 78.

by statute disability has been much qualified, 79.

divorce creates independent liability, 80.

otherwise as to mere separation, 81.

her contracts before marriage pass to husband, 82.

husband liable for wife's torts, 83.

wife may bind husband as agent, 84.

husband may be wife's agent, 85.

husband cannot divest himself of his duty by his own wrong, 86.

but liability ceases when wife leaves without cause, 87.

and when wife separates with allowance, 88.

married women may be bound by estoppel, and may enforce executed contracts, 89.

contracts for future separation invalid, 90.

agreements between husband and wife void, 91.

husband liable for necessities furnished wife, 92.

MASTER AND APPRENTICE, relations of, 322, 421, 613, 872. (See APPRENTICE.)

MASTER AND SERVANT.

Master liable on contract implied or express, 7, 707 *et seq.*

effect of *casus* on term of service, 714 *et seq.*

duration of term, 718.

limit of wages, 719 *et seq.*

when impossibility excuses performance, 323 *et seq.*

MATERIAL, error as to, when avoiding, 788.

MATERIALITY, when necessary to sustain action for deceit, 246.

MEANING OF TERMS, 601, 629 *et seq.*, 661, 803. (See INTERPRETATION.)

a question for jury, 631.

MEAT, when wholesomeness of, is warranted, 222 *et seq.*, 912.

MEDICAL MAN, sale of business by, 433.

undue influence by, 159, 161.

MEMORANDA, interpretation of, 634, 639.

MENTAL DISPARITY, no cause for avoiding contract, 158.

MENTAL RESERVATION, effect of, on promises, 175.

MERCANTILE TERMS, interpretation of, 630.

MERCHANT, LAW, as to negotiable paper, 494, 700, 838, 881, 953.

MERCHANTABILITY, when a condition, 223, 989.

MERGER, effect of, 687, 776, 955.

of remedy against joint debtor, 824 *et seq.*

of collateral in principal debt, 954.

INDEX.

MERGER—(continued).

of simple, in sealed contract, 684.

account stated in specialty, 778.

in novation, 857, 860.

of debt in judgment, 936.

METUS REVERENTIALIS, does not avoid contract, 157.

MINES, covenant to work, when defeated by failure of mine, 298.

contracts to develop, 889.

MINOR, contractual capacity of, 29 *et seq.* (See INFANCY.)

MISCONCEPTIONS, duty as to correction of, 252.

MISDEMEANOR, agreement to commit, invalid, 345.

compounding, 484 *et seq.*

how distinguishable from felony, 345.

MISDESCRIPTION, when vacating contract, 217. (See REPRESENTATION; FRAUD.)

MISJOINDER OF PARTIES, how affecting suit, 814 *et seq.*, 833-4. (See PARTIES.)

MISREPRESENTATION, when avoiding contract, 212 *et seq.*, 232 *et seq.* (See REPRESENTATION; FRAUD.)

MISTAKE.

Money paid in, may be recovered back, 197, 752-4.

but not when mistake is as to law, 198, 754.

when conscious, exposes to rescission and action for deceit, 175-6.

when unconscious and essential error prevents inception of contract, 177.

to be distinguished from impossibility of performance, 179.

mistake as to parties precludes contract, 180.

and so as to subject matter, 181.

no title passes when only bare charge is given, 182.

no title passes in false personation, 183.

signature to wrong document does not bind, 185.

essential error as to identity of thing precludes contract, 186.

and so as to error as to generic character of property, 187.

“substantial” error does not necessarily have this effect, 188.

nor does error as to quality, 189.

error as to quantity or price only *pro tanto* invalidates, 190.

if there be fraud as to quantity or quality, defrauded party may hold to bargain and sue for damages, 191.

error in accounts, and as to price, may be corrected *pro tanto*, 192.

error in motive not essential, 193.

error as to collateral or future matters not essential, 194.

contracts of bailment subject to same rules, 195.

negligent error does not excuse, 196.

money paid under mistake may be recovered back, 197.

error in law does not avoid, 198.

error in subsumption of facts not one of law, 199.

special knowledge not presumed in non-specialist, 200.

INDEX.

MISTAKE—(continued).

error of law, when acted on fraudulently, avoids, 201.

error of expression unessential, 202.

party is estopped from denying that his expressions were correct, 202 *a*.

error in time may be corrected, 203.

patent error cannot be corrected by extrinsic proof, 204.

MONEY, what is currency, 961, 983 *et seq.* (See **TENDER**.)

effect of payment in instalments, 935 *et seq.* (See **PAYMENT**)

MONEY BONDS, bind only for actual indebtedness, 689.

MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.

General rule that money had and received may be maintained where one person receives money for another, 722.

money must have been received to plaintiff's use, 723.

Money received by one person for another.

Agent liable to principal subject to terms of agency, 724.

even though object be illegal, 725.

so of trustee who admits balance, 726.

executor not liable to distributees unless on admitted claim, 727.

money received to use of third party cannot be sued for by such party without acknowledgment, 728.

stakeholder not liable until contingency occurs, 729.

Money wrongfully obtained.

Money wrongfully obtained may be sued for as money received to plaintiff's use, 730.

A. may recover proceeds of his property wrongfully sold by B., 731.

when A.'s money in B.'s hands is wrongfully obtained from B. by C., it may be recovered from C. by A., 732.

such money cannot be pursued in hands of strangers, 733.

goods fraudulently obtained may be followed into other hands, 734.

election to waive tort when made is final, 735.

value of goods unlawfully obtained may be recovered back, 736.

money obtained by extortion may be recovered back, 737.

so of money obtained by carriers, hotel keepers, and public officers, 738.

proceeds of goods wrongfully sold may be recovered from sheriff, 739.

money obtained by legal process cannot be recovered back, 740.

nor can money paid for illegal purposes, 741.

Money paid without consideration.

Money paid on an inoperative contract may be recovered back, 742.

deposit on real estate may be recovered back on failure to make title, 743.

money paid for worthless securities may be recovered back, 744.

money paid cannot be recovered back when contract is prevented from completion by *casus*, 745.

when title of goods is warranted, price cannot be recovered back ; and so when there is breach of warranty going to whole consideration, 746.

when failure of consideration is imputable to plaintiff, he cannot recover, 747.

INDEX.

MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED—(*continued*).

on partial failure of consideration, price when entire cannot be recovered back, 748.

a party buying on speculation and losing cannot recover back, 749.

compromise money paid voluntarily cannot be recovered back, 750.

money paid from motives of policy or kindness cannot be recovered back, nor debts of honor, 751.

Money paid in mistake.

Money paid in mistake of fact may be recovered back, 752.

mere negligence does not preclude party from recovering, 753.

money paid in mistake of law cannot be recovered back, 754.

when money paid by third person to agent can be recovered back, 755.

MONEY LENT.

To infant, 31 *et seq.*

to married woman, 77 *et seq.*

for illegal purpose, 341.

interest on, 461.

MONEY PAID INTO COURT, effect of, 970 *et seq.* (See TENDER.)

MONEY PAID TO ANOTHER'S USE.

Voluntary payment to another's use cannot be recovered back, but otherwise as to payment at request, 756.

request may be inferred from circumstances, 757.

money must have been actually paid, 758.

when A. is required by law to make payment for B. he may recover from B., 759.

so of party whose goods are attached to pay another's debt, 760.

not necessary that execution should issue, 761.

person whose goods are distrained on another's premises may recover from such other, 762

no recovery when the party paying acted negligently or officiously, 763.

party paying maritime liens may claim contribution, 764.

co-debtors and co-sureties paying common debt entitled to contribution, 765.

contribution limited by contract between parties, 766.

same principle extended to members of associations, 767.

surety entitled to contribution from principal, 768.

and to share securities with co-surety, 769.

insurer may recover from person causing loss, 770.

money contributed to illegal enterprise cannot be recovered back, nor can tort-feasor recover contribution, 341, 771.

MONEY RECEIVED (see MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED).

MONEY, TENDER OF, 970 *et seq.* (See TENDER.)

trade in, restrictions of, 461.

MONOMANIA, when avoiding collateral contract, 110.

MONOPOLIES, agreements for, how far invalid, 430 *et seq.*, 440.

"MONTH," meaning of word, 896.

INDEX.

MORAL OBLIGATION, not a consideration, 512.

"MORE OR LESS," meaning of term, 902.

MORTGAGE, when assignee may bind himself to pay, 786 *a*, 809.

parol evidence admissible to establish, 657 *et seq.*

in equity regarded as a mere security, 888.

issued by corporation, 135 *et seq.*

how debt is to be tendered, 972, 978.

MOTHER (see **PARENT**).

MOTIVE, concurrence of collateral does not affect issue, 242 *a*.

error as to, not ground to vacate contract, 193.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 143, 1066.

MUTUAL DEBTS, when to be set off, 1013 *et seq.* (See **SET-OFF**.)

MUTUAL PROMISES, a consideration, 523.

of marriage, 323, 575, 606, 882.

MUTUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS, consideration for, 528.

MUTUALITY, essential to contract, 2.

NAME, error as to, effect of, 202.

"NATURAL LOVE AND AFFECTION," how far a consideration, 494.

NECESSARIES.

Infant liable for necessities, 64.

but only for value received, and not on account stated or note, 65.

rules as to negotiable paper, 66.

articles of trade not necessities, 67.

otherwise as to educational or other services, 68.

necessaries conditioned on station, 69.

infant must be without home support, 70.

services rendered in preserving infant's property not necessities, 71.

money lent not necessities, 72.

contracts of marriage, 73.

infant may be estopped, 74.

necessaries in relation to married women, 84 *et seq.* (See **MARRIED WOMEN**.)

husband liable for necessities furnished to wife, 87.

lunatic liable for necessities, 101.

what are to be considered as necessities, 71, 92, 122.

NECESSITY, doctrine of, in relation to error, 174 *n*.

what degree of, constitutes *casus*, 296 *et seq.* (See **IMPOSSIBILITY**.)

what is considered such under Sunday laws, 388.

NEGLIGENCE, agreements releasing from liability for, void, 438.

when imposing contractual liability, 182, 185, 196, 200, 758, 908, 1043.

NEGLIGENCE IN CONTRACTING.

Non-existence of valid contract does not preclude action for negligence, 1043.

liability affirmed in Roman law, 1044.

party may recover expenses on void contract, 1045.

INDEX.

NEGLIGENCE IN CONTRACTING—(*continued*).

and may recover damages, 1046.

infant's liability in suits of this class, 1047.

so as to lunatics and drunkards, 1048.

liability when contract is avoided from mistake as to object, 1049.

party cannot take advantage of his own negligence of expression, 1050.

redress for verbal mistakes, 1051.

party liable for agent's negligence, 1052.

contributory negligence to be taken into account, 1053.

agents liable for unauthorized action, 1054.

and so of parties advertising rewards and making public offers, 1055.

and so of telegraph companies, 1056.

NEGLIGENCE, CONTRIBUTORY, does not preclude party from recovering money paid out by mistake, 753.

effect of, in barring right, 196, 286, 312, 325, 603, 661, 716, 747, 803, 901, 995.

precludes a party from setting up defence of *casus*, 309, 310; see 603-4, 716, 747, 901.

when barring a party from recovering back money paid in behalf of another, 763.

when casting on party loss of cheque or negotiable paper, 953.

NEGLIGENT MISTAKE, when precluding a party from recovering on contract, 196.

NEGOTIABILITY of bonds depends on terms, 797.

distinguished from assignability, 838.

when payable, 881.

NEGOTIABLE PAPER, capacity of infant as to, 37.

effect of alterations of, 700.

filling up blanks in, 186, 688, 795.

parties liable on, 810 *a*.

effect of payment by, 953 *et seq.* (See PAYMENT.)

tender of debt on, 980.

forged, money paid for, may be recovered back, 744.

lost, when suable, 694.

power of corporation to make, 138.

no consideration as to strangers required for, 494.

when signature to, by mistake, binds, 185.

place of payment of, 874.

NEGOTIATIONS, absorbed in written contract, 5, 643.

NEUTRALITY, contracts concerning, 479.

NEW CONTRACT, substitution of, for old, 852. (See NOVATION.)

NOMEN GENERALISSIMUM, how to be interpreted, 640.

NOMINAL DAMAGES, after tender, 972 *et seq.*

NON-COMPOTES MENTIS, 98 *et seq.* (See LUNATICS.)

NON-JOINDER, of parties, how affecting suit, 814 *et seq.*, 833. (See PARTIES.)

INDEX.

NOTICE.

- When required by contract, notice must be given, 567.
- at what time, takes effect, 896.
- notice of goods "to arrive," 568.
- in insurance, notice of loss not required unless stipulated, 569.
- guarantors and indemnifiers entitled to notice of acceptance, 570.
- and so of notice of default, 570 *a*.
- when debt is conditioned on event in creditor's peculiar knowledge, notice should be given, 571.
- whether notice is received is a question of fact, 572.
- drawer and indorser entitled to notice of dishonor, 573.

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE, requisites of, 9, 13.

NOTICE OF ELECTION, requisites of, 287, 290, 619, 735.

NOTICE OF REVOCATION, requisites of, 11.

NOTICE OF RESCISSION, should be prompt, 287.

NOVATION.

- Novation is the substitution of a new in the place of an old contract, 852.
- a new contract is essential to novation, 853.
- consent of the creditor is essential, 854.
- and so of consent of other parties, 855.
- to novation points of change are immaterial, 856.
- whether old agreement is extinguished depends on construction, 857.
- must be consideration for agreement of substitution, 858.
- only parties to a contract may sue or be sued on it, 859.
- extinguishment may be by merger, 860.
- novation may be proved by parol, 861.
- novation applied to partnership, 862.
- retiring partners not discharged by acceptance of new firm, 863.
- insurance may devolve duties on assignee, 864.
- novation within statute of frauds, 865.

NUDUM PACTUM, meaning of term, 493 *et seq.*

OBLIGATION OF CONTRACT, under constitution of the United States, 1061.

OBLIGATION, MORAL, not a consideration, 512.

OBLIGOR, in bond, 38, 329, 495, 577, 797, 810 *a*. (See BOND.)

- effect on, of alteration of bond, 695 *et seq.*

OFFENCES, compounding, 483 *et seq.*

- contracts to compound offences void, 483.
- distinction between felonies and misdemeanors obsolete, 484.
- approval of magistrate does not legalize, 485.
- settlement of private suit not precluded by the fact that criminal prosecution lies for same act, 486.
- question dependent upon local law of *nolle prosequi*, 487.
- criminal prosecutions should not be used for collection of debts, 488.
- money extorted in such cases can be recovered back, 737 *et seq.*

INDEX.

OFFER (see PROPOSAL).

OFFICE, agreement corruptly to procure, void, 403.

sale of, void, 407.

nature of, may be proved by parol, 804.

OFFICERS, agreements to unduly influence, void, 403-5.

promises to pay extra fees to, not binding, 500-502.

when entitled to recover special compensation, 500-502, 720.

OFFICERS OF CORPORATIONS, contracts of, for sale of influence, void, 409.

when binding corporation, 132.

OMISSIONS, when amounting to misrepresentation, 217, 249, 250.

in document, how to be supplied, 186, 688, 795.

ONEROUS CONTRACTS, definition of, 1, n.

OPINION, expression of, not misrepresentation, 215, 259-63.

OPINION, FALSE, not a false pretence, 259.

OPPRESSION, when vitiating contract induced by, 144 *et seq.*

"OPTIONS," when illegal, 453 a.

ORAL EVIDENCE, when admissible to explain writing, 661.

ORDER, supply of goods on, when implying accordance with order, 905.

when constituting assignment of debt, 836-48, 952.

ORDERS FOR GOODS, assignability of, 847.

OVERPAYMENT, when it can be recovered back, 737.

PAPER, FORGED, money paid for may be recovered back, 744.

PAPER, LOST, when suable, 694.

PARDONS, agreements to obtain, when void, 404.

PARENT, influence over child, effect of, 157-161.

when liable for child's necessities, 512.

PAROL, meaning of term, 642.

may establish, explain, vary, or rescind contract, 202, 661.

may prove release, 1032 *et seq.*

may prove or disprove consideration, 540.

may prove lost contract, 648, 694.

may prove parties, 803.

PART DELIVERY, failure as to, 580, 899.

PARTIAL IMPOSSIBILITY, when a defence, 330.

PARTIAL PAYMENT, effect of, 935.

when *quantum meruit* lies for, 713.

PARTIAL RECOVERY, when it may be had, 899.

PARTICEPS CRIMINIS, not entitled to recover on contract based on, 345.

PARTIES.

To constitute contract both must be bound, 2.

mistake as to identity of, avoids contract, 180.

Plaintiffs.

Only party to contract can sue on it, 784.

INDEX.

PARTIES—(continued).

in some states it is held that a third party can sue on a contract for his benefit, 785.

such cases explicable on the ground of novation or trust or negligence, 786.

illustrated in case of purchaser of mortgaged property, 786 *a*.

importance of restricting right to sue, 787.

in deeds *inter partes* only parties can join, 788.

on a deed poll party designated may sue, 789.

exceptions to general rule as to provisions for children, 790.

exception as to receiver of telegrams, 791.

exception as to consignee of goods, 792.

bill of lading passes by indorsement, 793.

exception in suits for money had and received, 794.

negotiable paper establishes liability to holder though unknown at the time of making, 795.

party may be estopped from denying liability, 796.

whether bonds are negotiable depends upon terms of document, 797.

novation requires creditor's assent, 798.

cestui que trust cannot sue unless party, 799.

plaintiff may depend for ascertainment on contingency, 800.

illustrated by offer of rewards, circular letters, and auction sales, 801.

principal, though undisclosed, can sue, 802.

real parties may be proved by parol, 803.

office or relationship may be thus explained, 804.

party cannot contract with himself, 805.

joining other parties makes no difference, 806.

partner cannot sue partnership at law, 807.

resolutions by a company to pay money to a third person do not entitle him to sue, unless he personally negotiate with the company, 808.

Defendants.

Assent of party charged necessary to bind him, 809.

only parties to a contract can be sued on it, 810.

illustrated in case of agents signing in their own names, 810 *a*.

exceptions of undisclosed principal, and of companies bound by promoters, 811.

action of tort may be maintained for abuse of contractual relations, 812.

by novation new debtor may be introduced, 813.

Joint Plaintiffs and Defendants.

All joint promisees must join, 814.

otherwise when they are several, 815.

question one of construction and parol explanation, 816.

plaintiffs cannot sue both jointly and severally, 817.

all partners should join, 818.

qualification as to one of several contractors suing contractually, 819.

on death of joint promisee debt survives, 820.

INDEX.

PARTIES—*(continued)*.

one joint promisee may release, 821.

non-joinder of plaintiffs unless amended is fatal, 822.

unamended misjoinder of plaintiffs is fatal if inconsistent with cause of action, 823.

joint defendants must be sued jointly, 824.

debts may be joint or several, 825.

question is one of construction, 826.

debt due on its face from two or more debtors is joint, 827.

otherwise if debt is payable individually, 828.

debtors may make themselves severally liable to each of several creditors, 829.

liability of partners is joint and several, 830.

release of one joint debtor releases all, 831.

each joint debtor liable for the whole, but on death liability pursues survivors, 832.

omission of joint promisor only matter for plea in abatement, 833.

misjoinder if unamended is fatal, 834.

joint debtor paying more than his share may recover from others, 835.

Assignees.

Assignee by modern practice may sue, 836.

assignment authorizes use of assignor's name, 837.

assignability distinguished from negotiability, 838.

no particular form is necessary, 839.

debtor's assent constitutes contractual relation, 840.

lex fori determines whether assignee can sue in his own name, 841.

assignment subject to equities between assignor and debtor, 842.

equities to be determined by the law to which the debt is subject, 843.

set-off must be due at time of assignment, 844.

notice to debtor of assignment necessary to protect assignee, 845.

parties may contract to assign free from equities, 846.

so as to orders for delivery of goods, 847.

to a suit by assignee it is a defence that the assignor had first to perform duties exclusively personal, 848.

infants as parties, 29 *et seq.* (See **INFANTS**.)

married women as parties, 76 *et seq.* (See **MARRIED WOMEN**.)

PARTNER, cannot sue partnership at law, 807.

when debt of, may be set off against partner, 946, 950, 1028.

effect of payment to or by, 946. (See **PAYMENT**.)

undue influence of over partner, 161.

liability of, is joint and several, 830.

when all should join in suit, 818.

PARTNERSHIP, capacity of infants as to, 40.

dissolved by death of member, 323.

merger of old in new firm, 862-3.

in illegal enterprises will not be enforced, 349.

INDEX.

PARTNERSHIP—(*continued*).

suspended by war, 473.

novation in, 862.

PART PAYMENT no consideration for promise to pay residue, 504, 935, 996, 1000.

when accord and satisfaction, 997-1008. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

PART PERFORMANCE, when contract can be rescinded after, 293, 580.

as to divisibility, see 233, 330, 338.

whether *quantum meruit* can be sustained on, 712, 899. (See PERFORMANCE.)

PASSENGER, liability of carrier for (see CARRIER).

when bound to take notice of conditions on ticket, 22, 185, 186, 196, 572.

PASTOR, undue influence by, vitiates contract, 161.

PATENT AMBIGUITY, cannot be explained, 204.

PATENT DEFECT, not included in warranty, 224. (See WARRANTY.)

PATENT RIGHTS, sale of, agreements for, 436.

PATERNAL POWER, cannot be divested by contract, 400.

PATRONAGE, interchange of, when a good consideration, 530.

PAWNBROKER, no warranty of title by, 230.

when sales by, are illegal, 367.

PAYMENT.

Place of, to follow contract, 871. (See PERFORMANCE.)

Appropriation.

Appropriation of payment to be in accordance with debtor's intent, 923. *

intent to be inferred from circumstances, 924.

insolvent distribution must be equal, 925.

right is one which third parties cannot exercise, 926.

if debtor does not appropriate creditor may do so, 927.

by Roman law, creditor is regarded as the debtor's agent in appropriation, 928.

in our law this agency is not recognized, 929.

creditor may appropriate to debts not recoverable, 930.

debts overdue preferred, 931.

creditor's election continues until communicated, 932.

in accounts where there is no designation, first debt is to be paid, 933.

in other cases, the law divides equitably, 934.

Partial Payment.

Receipt for less sum may extinguish debt if there be distinctive consideration, 935.

plaintiff, by suing part of claim to judgment, may extinguish the whole, 936.

fractional payment may extinguish larger unliquidated claim, 937.

Receipts.

Receipt open to explanation by parol, 938.

INDEX.

PAYMENT—(continued).

receipts may estop as to third parties, 939.

one of several joint receivers may show that the money was received by his associates, 940.

releases must be under seal, or must have consideration, 941.

Payment by and to Agents, Executors, Trustees, and Joint Debtors.

Payment by third party on behalf of debtor may discharge debt, 942.

payment to an agent is payment to principal, 943.

so of payment to solicitor or attorney, 944.

factors and auctioneers may receive payment, but not brokers, 945.

payment to partner is payment to firm, 946.

executors may give receipts, 947.

trustees have only limited power to receipt, 948.

payment by one joint debtor discharges the other, 949.

payment to one joint creditor releases debt, 950.

joint deposit in bank can only be drawn out by joint order, 951.

purchase by stranger may be to take assignment of debt, 952.

Payment by Negotiable Paper.

Receipt of check *prima facie* proof of payment, 953.

negotiable security may be taken as mere collateral, 954.

question one of inference, 955.

acceptance of immature negotiable paper on account operates as conditional payment, 956.

negotiable paper may be accepted in satisfaction, 957.

may bar suit when holder by negligence releases paper, 958.

if passed to others, or lost, or altered, this may bar suit, 959.

void security no payment, 960.

Payment in Bank Notes.

Valid when a legal tender, 961.

Payment by Letter.

Sufficient when in accordance with instructions, 962.

Payment in Goods, and Set-off.

Payment in goods may, by agreement, be equivalent to payment in money, 963.

set-off, when agreed to, equivalent to payment, 964.

debts excluded by statute, and illegal debts, 965.

Effect of Payment.

Damages for detention of debt limited to interest, 966.

after suit brought, payment must cover interest and costs, 967.

PAYMENT FOR ANOTHER, when to be recovered back, 756 *et seq.*

(See **MONEY PAID TO ANOTHER'S USE.**)

PAYMENT OF MONEY INTO COURT, effect of, 976. (See **TENDER**).

PENALTIES, not to be enforced on money bonds, 689.

PENALTY, imposed by itself does not make act illegal, 364.

PENSIONS, when assignable, 412.

INDEX.

PERFORMANCE.

General Rules.

- Performance must be in accordance with terms of contract, 869.
- by consent mode of performance may be varied, 870.
- as to conditions, see 545 *et seq.*
- as to part performance of contract of service, see 716 *et seq.*; of contract of sale, 899.
- performance may be a condition precedent, 558, 581, 606.

Place.

- Performance to be in assigned place, 871.
- when no place is designated, place of performance is to be inferred, 872.
- on contract to pay money tender must be made personally, 873.
- form of contract determined by place of solemnization; meaning of words by place of agreement; process by *lex fori*; mode of performance by *lex loci solutionis*, 874.
- distinctive rule as to negotiable paper, 875.
 - as to insurance, 875 *a.*
 - as to common carriers, 876.
- on contract for sale of goods delivery may be to purchaser's carrier, 877.
- otherwise as to delivery to captain of ship on bill of lading, 878.
- vendor must see goods are properly received by carrier, 879.
- vendor may make carrier his agent, 880.

Time.

- Money obligations without date are payable on demand, 881.
- when no time is fixed for performance a reasonable time is implied, 882.
- so of goods payable on demand, 882 *a.*
- time in other cases to be inferred, 883.
- when time is fixed, full limit is allowed, 884.
- last business hour permissible, 885.
- party by disabling himself or refusing, may make himself liable to suit before day fixed, 885 *a.*
- "forthwith" and similar terms to be construed according to context, 886.
- time may be of essence, and if so stipulations enforcing it will be compelled, 887.
- construction of time in equity same as in law, 888.
- forfeiture may be fixed by agreement, 889.
- forfeiture from lapse of time cannot be exacted by dilatory party, 890.
- punctuality waived by acceptance, 891.
- time may by notice be made essential, 892.
- nominal date presumed to be real, 893.
- date of beginning of lease determined by context, 894.
- when liability continues from one specified day to another, the first is excluded and the last included, 895.
- "month" in mercantile contracts means "calendar" month, 896.
- when time falls on Sunday, delivery may be on next day, 897.

INDEX.

PERFORMANCE—(continued).

Quantity or Quality.

- Quantity stipulated for must be delivered, 898.
- when duty is divisible, performance may be partial, 899.
- otherwise when aggregate is contracted for, 900.
- party preventing completion cannot charge the other with the loss, 901
- “about,” “more or less,” are proximate terms, 902.
- article not answering description may be returned, 903.
- or vendor may be sued on warranty, 904.
- article supplied to order is warranted to answer order, 905.
- and so when vendor is specially trusted, 906.
- otherwise when purchaser buys on his own judgment, 907.
- vendor may be liable for negligence, 908.
- express warranty excludes implied, 909.
- warranty may be implied from usage, 910.
- warranty does not cover depreciation in transit, 911.
- provisions sold for domestic use must be fit, 912.
- conditions imposed by local law must be complied with, 913.
- on sale by sample article must conform to sample, 914.
- showing sample is not necessarily selling by sample, 915.
- on sale by sample or description purchaser must have opportunity of inspection, 916.
- average correspondence with sample is enough, 917.
- warranty may be added to sample, 918.

Rescission.

- On non-performance of condition precedent, contract may be rescinded, 919.
- when to be alleged before recovery, 558, 581, 606.

PERFORMANCE OF CONDITIONS.

- Performance depends on terms, 601.
- fiction of fulfilment of conditions when party releases, 602.
- and so when such party prevents fulfilment, 603.
- and so when performance is waived, 604.
- employee prevented by employer from working may recover, 605.
- party disabling himself cannot set up technical default of other party, 606.
- substantial performance is sufficient, but this must be proved, 607.
- impossible condition vacates contract, 547.

PERICULUM, Roman law as to, 314.

PERILS OF THE SEA, 298, 308, 311, 670, 875.

PERMANENCY, presumption of, 315, *n.*

PERMANENT IMPOSSIBILITY, nature of, 331.

PERSONAL CONTRACT, dependant on capacity of party, 323 *et seq.*

- when assignable, 784 *et seq.*, 836.

PERSONAL PROPERTY, warranty, 212 *et seq.*

- title of *bona fide* purchasers, 211, 291, 347, 376, 732.
- no market overt, 734.
- conditions in respect to, 545 *et seq.*

INDEX.

PERSONAL PROPERTY—(continued).

performance of contract as to, 869 *et seq.*

fraud in sales of, 232 *et seq.*

illegal sales of, 335.

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES (see ASSIGNEES; EXECUTORS).

PHYSICIAN, sale of business of, 433.

undue influence by, 159, 161.

PLACE, law of, as determining meaning, 637. (See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

PLACE OF ACCEPTANCE, determines law of contract, 20.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE, to follow contract, 871. (See CONFLICT OF LAWS.)

performance to be in assigned place, 871.

when no place is designated, place of performance is to be inferred, 872.

on contract to pay money tender must be made personally, 873.

form of contract determined by place of solemnization; meaning of words
by place of agreement; process by *lex fori*; mode of performance by
lex loci solutionis, 874.

distinctive rule as to negotiable paper, 875.

as to insurance, 875 *a.*

as to common carriers, 876.

on contract for sale of goods delivery may be to purchaser's carrier, 877.

otherwise as to delivery to captain of ship on bill of lading, 878.

vendor must see goods are properly received by carrier, 879.

may make carrier his agent, 880.

PLAINTIFFS.

Only party to contract can sue on it, 784.

in some states it is held that a third party can sue on a contract for his
benefit, 785.

such cases explicable on ground of novation or trust or negligence, 786.

illustrated in case of purchaser of mortgaged property, 786 *a.*

importance of restricting right to sue, 787.

in deeds *inter partes* only parties can join, 788.

on a deed poll party designated may sue, 789.

exceptions to general rule as to provisions for children, 790.

exception as to receiver of telegrams, 791.

exception as to consignee of goods, 792.

bill of lading passes by indorsement, 793.

exception in suits for money had and received, 794.

negotiable paper establishes liability to holder though unknown at the
time of making, 795.

party may be estopped from denying liability, 796.

whether bonds are negotiable depends upon terms of document, 797.

novation requires creditor's assent, 798.

cestui que trust cannot sue unless party, 799.

plaintiff may depend for ascertainment on contingency, 800.

illustrated by offer of rewards, circular letters, and auction sales, 801.

INDEX.

PLAINTIFFS—(*continued*).

- principal, though undisclosed, can sue, 802.
- real parties may be proved by parol, 803.
- office or relationship may be thus explained, 804.
- party cannot contract with himself, 805.
- joining other parties makes no difference, 806.
- partner cannot sue partnership at law, 807.
- resolutions by a company to pay money to a third person do not entitle him to sue, unless he personally negotiate with the company, 808.
- as to joint plaintiffs see JOINT PLAINTIFFS.

PLEDGE OF COLLATERALS, effect of, 954, 996 *et seq.*

POLICE REGULATIONS, how far infringing constitution of the United States, 1062.

POLICIES OF INSURANCE, construction of, 311, 670, 875 *a.*

- effect of alteration of, 701.
- when divisible, 338 *a.*
- insured must have interest in, 451, 455.
- how affected by war, 319, 547. (See LIFE INSURANCE.)
- when illegal, cannot be sued on, 350, 455.

POLICY OF THE LAW, promises against, void, 325, 394, 508. (See PREFACE.)

- trading with enemies, 473.
- breach of neutrality, 479.
- to do immoral acts, 370.
- to debase the family relation, 394.
- to injure public service, 402.
- to restrain trade, 430.
- to injuriously promote litigation, 421.
- avoidance of contracts by, constitutionality of, 1062.

POLLICITATION, meaning of in Roman law, 493 *n.*

POOLING CONTRACTS, when void, 442 *a.*

POSSESSION, how far giving title, 292, 734, 793.

- when constituting *bona fide* purchase, 211, 291, 347, 376, 732, 734.

POST, communication of acceptance by, 18.

- when letters sent by, are presumed to be received, 962.

POSTING LETTERS, effect of, 18, 962.

POST-NUPTIAL SETTLEMENTS, effect of, 91.

POST-OFFICE ORDER, when payment, 986.

POWER OF ATTORNEY, construction of, 656.

PRECEDENT CONDITIONS, 551 *et seq.* (See CONDITIONS.)

PREFERENCES, by insolvent, when lawful, 381.

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENTS, when absorbed in final, 643.

PREMIUM, suit for, law governing, 875 *a.*

PRESENTS, cannot be recovered back, 496, 742, 751.

PRESUMPTION, of continuance of influence, 162.

- of payment from non-demand, 938.

INDEX.

PRESUMPTION—(*continued*).

- of consideration of negotiable paper, 539.
- of consideration of sealed instruments, 495.
- of good faith, 654.
- of reasonableness, 656 *et seq.*

PRICE, inadequacy of, when ground to set aside contract, 165. (See **RESCISSION**.)

- when to be recovered back, 722 *et seq.*, 898 *et seq.* (See **MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED**; **PERFORMANCE**.)

PRIEST, undue influence by, vitiates contract, 161.

PRINCIPAL, relations of to agent (see **AGENT**).

- bound by agent's statements, 269. (See **AGENTS**.)
- contracts of agent to the prejudice of, when void, 378.
- liable to agent for advances, 757-9.
- liable for agent's negligence, 1052.
- may recover from agent in money had and received, 724.
- undisclosed, may sue, 802.
 - may be sued, 811.

- debt of, may be set off against agent, 1027. (See **SET-OFF**.)

- liable for surety's advances, 759.

PRINCIPAL AND SURETY (see **SURETY**; **GUARANTEE**).

PRINT, relations of, when conflicting with writing, in a document, 652.

PRIORITY, in application of payment, 928.

PRISONER, contracts by, 148 *et seq.*

PRIVATE PROSECUTIONS, when open to private settlement, 486.

PRIVIES, when capable of disaffirming infant's contract, 55.

PRIVITY OF CONTRACT, necessity of, 22, 184, 507, 784.

- nature of, 205.

- essential to consideration, 506-7.

- when necessary to suit, 784 *et seq.*, 810. (See **PARTIES**.)

- necessary to sustain warranty, 237.

- when requisite to sustain action for money had and received, 728.

PRIZES, stipulations for, how far invalidating contracts, 458.

PROCESS, determined by *lex fori*, 796, 841, 875.

PROFITS, agent making must account for, 378, 934.

PROFLIGATE PERSONS, when made by statute incapable of contract, 124.

PROHIBITION BY LAW, when constituting impossibility, 305.

PROMISE (see **CONTRACTS GENERALLY**).

- a good consideration for, 523.

- essential to contract, 2.

- how related to proposal, 8 *et seq.*

- inferred by law, 6, 7, 707.

- not sufficient when founded on moral duty, 512.

- when contained in advertisement or general notice, 24, 800 *et seq.*

- when third party can sue on, 784 *et seq.*

PROMISE, FALSE, not a false statement, 257.

INDEX.

PROMISE TO MARRY, personal incapacity, when a defence to, 323.

to be performed in reasonable time, 882.

party disabling himself cannot set up disability, 324, 608, 885 *a*.

when demand is necessary, 575.

PROMISEE, entitled to sue on promise, 784 *et seq.* (See **PARTIES**.)

PROMISEES, JOINT, when all must join in suit, 814 *et seq.*

releases by, 821 *et seq.*

PROMISSORY NOTES (see **NEGOTIABLE PAPER**).

Bind without consideration as to strangers, 494.

when payable, 881.

effect of alteration of, 700.

place of payment of, 875.

effect of payment with, 954. (See **PAYMENT**.)

PROMOTERS OF COMPANIES, how far bound to candor, 255 *a*.

PROPOSAL, effect of:

Contracts resolvable into proposal and acceptance, 8.

proposal not to bind beyond reasonable time, 9.

may be implied from facts, 707-9.

when rejected a proposal is exhausted, 9 *a*.

until accepted a proposal may be revoked, but not afterwards, 10.

revocation requires notice brought home to party addressed, 11.

except in case of proposer's death or insanity, 12.

proposer may bind himself to keep open proposal to specific date, 13.

proposal not binding if not continuous, 14.

if not accepted within designated limits as to time and place, proposal falls, 15.

proposal and acceptance may be conditional, 16.

so of subscriptions to joint enterprises, 16 *a*.

acceptance must be communicated when required, 17.

agreement to be bound on mere posting of acceptance may be implied, 18.

rule depends on terms of proposal, 19.

grants under seal may bind grantor without communication to grantee, 23.

general proposal binds as to all parties taking action in conformity with its terms, 24.

so of railway time tables, 25.

so of letters of credit and promises to accept bills, 25 *a*.

from proposals are to be distinguished bids for customers, 26.

PROSECUTION, CRIMINAL, cannot be used to collect debt, 151 *a*, 483 *et seq.*

compounding of, illegal, 483.

PRO TANTO compensation, suits for, 707 *et seq.* (See **IMPLIED CONTRACT**.)

PROTEST, practice as to (see **NEGOTIABLE PAPER**).

PROVISIONAL AGREEMENTS, when absorbed in final, 643.

effect of, 5, 645.

PROVISIONAL CONCURRENCE, effect of, 5.

INDEX.

- PROVISIONS, to be fit for domestic use, 222, 912.
- PROVISO, construction of, 666.
- PUBLIC ENEMY, trading with, illegal, 473.
act of, when a defence, 93, 319, 478.
- PUBLIC JUSTICE, agreements to abuse, void, 415.
and so of compounding crimes, 483.
- PUBLIC OFFICE, sale of, void, 407.
- PUBLIC OFFICERS, agreements to privately pay, void, 502.
may be compelled to pay back excessive charges, 738. (See OFFICERS.)
- PUBLIC POLICY, agreements against, void, 335, 394. (See POLICY.)
- PUBLIC SERVICE, agreements to corruptly interfere with, void, 402.
- PUFFER, when employment of, avoids auction, 267.
- "PUFFS" not false pretences, 261.
- PUNCTUALITY, when required, 881 *et seq.*
when waived, 885, 891.
- PUNCTUATION, to be followed in construction, 651.
- PURCHASER AT AUCTION, when entitled to sue, 801.
- PURCHASERS, *bona fide*, rights of, 211, 296, 347, 352, 376, 732, 734.
when illegality follows purchase, 352.
title taken by, 211, 291, 347, 733.
when to bear destruction by *casus*, 317.
when to see to delivery of goods, 877.
- QUALITY, error as to, when avoiding contract, 189.
- QUANTITY, error as to, when avoiding contract, 190.
stipulated, to be delivered, 898.
- QUANTUM MERUIT, scope of, 707 *et seq.*, 711. (See IMPLIED CONTRACT; MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.)
tender in respect to, 973 *et seq.*
- QUID PRO QUO, the basis of our doctrine of consideration, 493.
- RACING, contracts for, when illegal, 451 *et seq.*
- RAILROAD CORPORATIONS, powers of, 127 *et seq.*
how far under constitutional control, 1063 *et seq.* (See COMMON CARRIERS; CORPORATIONS.)
- RAILROAD MONOPOLIES, agreements for, when void, 437.
- RAILROAD TIME TABLES, how far contractual, 25.
- RAILROADS, bargains of, as to stations, when void, 414.
exceptions in contracts by, when valid, 438.
when notice to customer, 22, 185, 196, 572, 515.
when contracts by are *ultra vires*, 135 *et seq.*
- RASH MISSTATEMENT, when imputable as falsity, 241.
- RATIFICATION, from what it is to be implied, 288.
when precluding rescission, 282.
when it may go to part of contract, 46.
as to contracts unduly influenced, 168.
- RATIFICATION AFTER DURESS, 154.

INDEX.

RATIFICATION OF INFANT'S CONTRACTS.

- Privies may disaffirm contract, 55.
- for ratification full age is necessary, 56.
- knowledge of law is not necessary, 57.
- ratification to be inferred from facts: continued enjoyment of profits, 58.
- so of continuance in possession, 59.
- silence by vendor may amount to estoppel, 60.
- vendor's second deed may disaffirm first, 61.
- conditional ratification may be complied with, 62.
- executory contract, when resisted, must be shown to have been ratified, 63.

RATIFICATION OF LUNATIC'S CONTRACT, 114.

READING DOCUMENT, when presumed from signing, 22, 185, 196, 572, 615.

REASONABLE PRICE, what constitutes, 518.

REASONABLE TIME, construction of term, 882.

REBUILD, covenant to, when defeated by *casus*, 318.

RECEIPT.

- Open to explanation by parol, 938.
- may estop as to third parties, 939.
- effect of releases, 941. (See RELEASES.)
- power of executors to give, 947.
 - agents, 942.
 - attorney, 944.
 - factors and auctioneers, 945.
 - partner, 946.
 - trustees, 948.
 - joint debtor, 949.

tender on condition of, 971 *et seq.*

RECIPROCAL DEBTS, when extinguishing, 1012. (See SET-OFF.)

RECITALS, effect of, in construction, 664, 667.

RECKLESS MISSTATEMENT, when imputable as falsity, 241.

RECKLESSNESS, when imposing liability, 214.

RECOGNIZANCE, what is a defence to, 321.

RECOVERY BACK OF MONEY, 722 *et seq.* (See MONEY HAD AND RECEIVED.)

RECTIFICATION.

- Bilateral error may be corrected, 205.
- concurrent error ground for rectification, 206.
- rescission granted on proof of unilateral mistake; rectification on proof of bilateral, 207.
- proof should be strong and plain, 208.
- contract requiring distinct modes of proof cannot be inserted, 209.
- obvious mistake may be corrected by context, 210.
- rectification not granted against *bona fide* purchaser, 211.
- to be proved by parol, 661.

INDEX.

REDUCTION INTO POSSESSION, by husband of wife's assets, 76 *et seq.*

REFEREE, action of, as determining condition, 593.

REFORMATION OF CONTRACT, when decreed, 205. (See RECTIFICATION.)

"REGRATING," 453 *et seq.*

REIMBURSEMENT, when party making, may recover, 756 *et seq.*

REJECTION OF PROPOSAL, effect of, 9 *a.*

RELATION, undue influence by, 161.

RELATIONS, when not entitled to sue for services rendered, 719.

RELATIVE WORDS, to be considered in construction, 662.

RELEASE.

A release is a discharge of a debt, 1031.

at common law must be under seal or must have consideration, 1032.

no special words required to constitute, 1033.

discharges debt and incidents, 1034.

will be equitably restrained, 1035.

effect of covenant not to sue, 1036.

release to be construed according to intention, 1037.

must be to proper parties, 1038.

may be conditional, 1039.

may be by novation and merger, 1040.

may be by alteration of document, 1041.

rescission implied by lapse of time, 1042.

RELEASE OF DEBT, when a good consideration, 521, 527.

reciprocal, effect of, 527.

RELEASE OF JOINT DEBTS, effect of, 998. (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

RELEASED DEBT, promise to pay, 513.

RELEASES, insolvent, inoperative when fraudulent, 380.

RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, mutual subscriptions, consideration for, 528.

REMITTEE, when entitled to recover on remittance, 728.

RENT, implied contracts for, 708 *et seq.*

where payable, 873. (See LANDLORD.)

when suspended by *casus*, 318.

cannot be recovered on lease for illegal object, 348.

REPAIR, covenant to, when conditioned by act of lessor, 586.

when defeated by *casus*, 318.

REPORTS BY AGENT to principal, when binding principal, 273.

REPRESENTATIONS.

Representations to be distinguished from conditions and warranties, 212.

there must be causal relation between misrepresentation and contract, 213.

contract induced by honest misapprehension may be rescinded, though no action for deceit may be maintained, 214.

expressions of opinion not representations, 215.

INDEX.

REPRESENTATIONS—(*continued*).

misrepresentations must have been material, and must have produced the injury, 216.

suppression of facts does not bind unless amounting to distortion of truth, 217.

a condition negatives concurrence of minds; warranty assumes concurrence, but gives damages for misstatement, 218.

warranty need not be in any particular words, 219.

warranty on one point excludes general implied warranty, 220.

supplying for particular purpose implies fitness, 221.

selling meat for human food implies fitness, 222.

selling by merchant implies merchantability, and by manufacturer implies that he made the goods, 223.

defects open to inspection not warranted against, 224.

selling by sample implies correspondence with sample, 225.

representation may be an estoppel, 226.

no warranty when buyer depends on his own judgment, 227.

vendor may be liable for negligence, 228.

sale "with all faults" excludes warranty, 229.

warranty of title implied in sale, 230.

to sustain such suit there must be eviction, 231.

REPRESENTATIONS BY AGENT, when binding principal, 269 *et seq.*

REPUGNANT CLAUSES, how to be construed, 673.

REQUEST.

Prior demand not necessary to constitute indebtedness, 575.

demand necessary when implied in contract of bailment or other contract, 576.

bonds conditioned on payment on demand require demand, 577.

when sustaining suit for the payment of money, 756.

what such request is to be inferred from, 757. (See IMPLIED CONTRACT.)

RESCINDED CONTRACT, does not prevent recovery on merits, 707, 712.

(See RESCISSION.)

money can be recovered back on, 742.

RESCISSION.

Party deceived may rescind contract, and so when the party is unable to perform, 282.

and so in cases of error, 207.

contracts induced by fraud are voidable, 283.

election must be in reasonable time, 284.

party rescinding must do equity, 285.

rescission not granted when by complainant's laches other party is exposed to loss, 286.

party rescinding should give notice, 287.

ratification may be by conduct, 288.

mere lapse of time does not estop, 289.

election is final and must be single, 290.

INDEX.

RESCISSION—(*continued*).

- rescission cannot be granted to impair rights of third parties, 291.
- party without title cannot pass title, 292.
- rescission may be granted on failure in part performance, 293.
- consequence of non-compliance with condition precedent, 919.
- by novation, 852 *et seq.*
- to be proved by parol, 661.
- when worked by failure to deliver first instalments, 580.

RESERVATION, MENTAL, promises made in, 175.

RES JUDICATA, when plea of applies, 936-7.

- set-off in respect to, 1017 *et seq.*

RESOLUTION of company, how far a contract, 808.

RESOLUTIVE CONDITIONS, effect of, 550.

RESTITUTIO IN INTEGRUM, effect of, 282 *et seq.*, 287.

RESTRAINT OF MARRIAGE, agreement to effect invalid, 396.

RESTRAINT OF TRADE, 430 *et seq.* (See TRADE.)

RESTRICTIVE WORDS, when to be rejected in construction, 664 *et seq.*

RETURN OF GOODS, when permitted in cases of mistake, 903.

REVENUE LAWS, agreements to infringe, 445.

REVERSIONER, title of, under condition subsequent, 616.

REVOCATION, of proposal, effect of, 10 *et seq.*

- to be proved by parol, 661.
- notice of, 11.
- rules in respect to, 10, 11, 18, 27.

REWARDS, effect of offers of, 24.

RISK, when taken by purchaser, 583.

- when transferred by sale, 317.

SABBATH, contracts made on, 382 *et seq.* (See SUNDAY.)

SALARY, implied contract for, 707 *et seq.* (See IMPLIED CONTRACT.)

- when suspended by dismissal or accident, 716.
- when precluding suit on *quantum meruit*, 720.
- when assignable, 411.

SALE.

- Implied promise of, may be raised when express is bad under statute of frauds or otherwise defective, 711.
- when, after partial delivery of goods, final delivery is prevented, vendor may sue on *indebitatus* count, 712.
- otherwise when there is to be no payment except for aggregate, 713.
- by infant (see INFANTS).
- by auction (see AUCTION).
- warranty on (see WARRANTY).
- party without title cannot pass title, 292, 734, 793.
- how to be carried out, 869. (See PERFORMANCE.)
- consideration of, 493 *et seq.* (See CONSIDERATION.)
- when induced by fraud, 232 *et seq.* (See FRAUD.)

INDEX.

SALE—(continued).

title of *bona fide* purchasers, 211, 291, 347, 376, 733.

when implying warranty, 223.

by sample, 225, 914. (See SAMPLE.)

when transferring risk, 317.

duty of vendor to give correct description, 250.

illegal, cannot be sued on, 342.

fraudulent (see FRAUD).

conditional, effect of, 545 *et seq.*

SALE OF OFFICES OR INFLUENCE, illegal, 402 *et seq.*

"SALE OR RETURN," contracts of, 590, 611.

SALES "TO ARRIVE," construction of term, 563.

SAMPLE, how far a condition, 565.

selling by, warranty implied in, 225.

effect of sale by, 914-5, 917.

SANITY, necessary to contractual power, 98.

SATISFACTION of debt, when worked by negotiable paper, 953 *et seq.*

(See PAYMENT; ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

nature and requisites of, 996 *et seq.* (See ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.)

"SAY ABOUT," meaning of term, 902.

SCIENTER to be inductively proved, 240.

SCRIP, negotiability of, 797.

SCRIVENER, mistakes by, effect of, 206.

SEAL, how far dispensing with consideration, 495.

SEALED DOCUMENTS, how far open to parol explanation, 642.

SEALED INSTRUMENTS, capacity of infants as to, 38.

SEALS AND SEALED CONTRACTS.

Sealing is a solemn mode of assent, 680.

due sealing will be presumed, 681.

sealing imports consideration, 682.

consideration cannot be disputed by those claiming under deed, 683.

simple contracts distinguishable from sealed contracts as to quality, as to consideration, and as to merger, 684.

sealed obligations have longer limitations than unsealed, 685.

no priority to specialty debts, 686.

alteration after execution avoids: filling in blanks, 687.

party executing deeds is bound, though other party has not executed, 688.

common money bond binds only for actual indebtedness, 689.

specialty may be modified or rescinded by parol, 690.

rules of construction the same as for other documents, 691.

SEAMEN, promise of extra pay to, void, 503.

when entitled to recover on incomplete voyage, 707 *et seq.*

SECULAR LABOR, when forbidden on Sunday, 382.

SECURITIES, when accepted as collateral and when as payment, 953 *et seq.*

SELF-INFLICTED DISABILITY, no defence, 312, 325, 603.

INDEX.

SELF-INFLICTED LOSSES, party cannot recover damages for, 286, 312, 325, 603, 661, 716, 747, 901, 995.

SEPARATE ESTATE, 77 *et seq.* (See **MARRIED WOMEN**.)

SEPARATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE, deeds of, conditional character of, 614.

contracts for, when void, 91, 395.

settlements based on, when valid, 395.

SERVANT (see **MASTER**).

When entitled to recover on implied contract, 707. (See **IMPLIED CONTRACT**.)

SERVICE, acceptance of, implies promise to pay, 7, 707.

contracts limiting, 430, 437.

term of, 716 *et seq.*

SET-OFF.

Set-off a processual right and governed by *lex fori*, 1009.

no set-off at common law, 1010.

set-off may be specially stipulated, 1011.

by statute extended to mutual debts, 1012.

equitable claims may be set off, 1013.

set-off does not extinguish debt, but only affects remedy, 1014.

use of on trial is optional, 1015.

practice as to counter-claim, 1016.

only actionable debts can be set off, 1017.

to debts barred by statute of limitations statute must be specially pleaded, 1018.

debts not due at date of suit cannot be set off, 1019.

must be due when offered at trial, 1020.

must be between the same parties, 1021.

personal debts cannot be set off against representatives, 1022.

agent's debt cannot be set off against principal, 1023.

surety may avail himself of debts due his principal, 1024.

after assignment, debt due assignee may be set off on suit by him, 1025.

distinctive rule as to insolvent and bankrupt assignees and receivers, 1026.

principal's debt may be set off against agent, 1027.

so as to partners, 1028.

unliquidated damages not admissible as set-off, though admissible as counter-claim, 1029.

set-off not admissible in proceedings *in rem*, 1030.

when equivalent to payment, 964.

effect of when appropriated to debts excluded by statute and illegal debts, 965. (See **PAYMENT**.)

SETTLEMENT, based on error, when open to revision, 192.

SETTLEMENT OF CLAIM, when a good consideration, 533-5.

SETTLEMENTS in fraud of creditors void, 376.

and so in fraud of marital rights, 399.

SEVERABLE CONTRACTS, what are, 233, 330, 338, 511, 580, 899. (See **DIVISIBLE**.)

INDEX.

- SEVERAL, what debts are to be considered, 814, 824 *et seq.* (See PARTIES.)
- SEVERAL SUITS, when to be maintained by joint parties, 817. (See JOINT CREDITOR, JOINT DEBT.)
- SEVERANCE of illegal from legal stipulation, 338.
- SEVERANCE OF PARTIES, when to be worked, 815.
- SEXUAL OFFENCES, agreements to further, void, 373.
- SHAREHOLDER.
- When infant may be, 40 *et seq.*
 - when married women may be, 69 *et seq.*
 - rights of, 139 *et seq.*
- SHERIFF, sale by, does not imply warranty, 230.
- transfers title, 740.
 - when required to refund, 739.
- SHIP, insurance of in ignorance of loss, 298 *et seq.*
- sale of, in ignorance of loss, 298, 308. (See BILL OF LADING ; CHARTER PARTY.)
- SHORT HAND terms, interpretation of, 634, 636.
- SICKNESS, when a defence to a contract for personal service, 323.
- SIGNATURE to wrong document does not bind, 185.
- to deed (see DEED).
- SIGNING DOCUMENT, presumes acquaintance with its contents, 22, 185, 572, 615.
- SILENCE, when constituting a contract, 6. (See ESTOPPEL.)
- SIMPLE CONTRACTS, distinctive features of, 684.
- consideration of, 493 *et seq.* (See CONSIDERATION.)
- SIMULATION, how far affecting validity of promise, 175.
- SMUGGLING, agreement for, 445 *et seq.*
- SOLEMNIZATION of contract, determined by place, 874.
- SOLICITOR, effect of payment to or by, 942, 944. (See PAYMENT.)
- sale of business by, 433.
 - undue influence by, 161. (See ATTORNEY.)
- SOLVENCY, false statements as to, when false pretences, 262.
- intention not to pay may be a false pretence, 258.
- SPECIALIST, assumed to have special knowledge, 200.
- liability for deceit in his department, 264.
- SPECIALTY, when requiring consideration, 495. (See DEEDS, SEALS.)
- when to be modified by parol, 642, 690.
 - capacity of infants as to, 38.
- SPECIFIC MEANING, to be brought out, 667.
- SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE, right to, 212, 232 *et seq.*, 282, 301, 305.
- SPECULATION, party buying cannot recover back, 749.
- SPENDTHRIFTS, by statute made incapable of contract, 124.
- SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS, when contracts for sale of illegal, 342-3, 348.
- law of place of performance determines, 361, 871.
- SPOLIATION, presumption against, 695 *et seq.*

INDEX.

STAKEHOLDER, rights of, under wager, 452.

deposit with auctioneer as such may be recovered back, 729.

when liable for money had and received, 729.

STAMP, local law as to, to be observed, 913.

STATE, has no constitutional power to abrogate contracts, 1063.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT, when subject of suit, 774.

STATUTE OF FRAUDS, how far precluding parol modifications of contract, 661.

whether novation is covered by, 865.

as to performance generally, 869 *et seq.*

STATUTE, VIOLATION OF.

Contract to violate statute is illegal, 360.

in conflict *lex loci solutionis* prevails, 361.

evasions of statute invalidate, 362.

not necessary that penalty should be prescribed, 363.

mere penalty imposed does not make contract illegal, 364.

otherwise when act is made unlawful, 365.

party protected by statute may sue, 366.

agreement cannot be made unlawful by subsequent legislation, or change of judicial opinion, nor can it be validated by subsequent legislation, 367.

void contract cannot be validated, 368.

STAY-LAWS, constitutionality of, 1067 *et seq.*

STIPULATIONS, construction of, 670.

STOCK-BROKERAGE, contracts incident to, 442 *et seq.*, 453 *et seq.*

STOCKHOLDERS OF CORPORATION, powers of, 139. (See **SHAREHOLDERS.**)

STOCKS, purchase of, for future delivery, when invalid, 453.

STOLEN GOODS, see 211, 291, 347, 376, 732, 734.

STOPPAGE IN TRANSITU, vendor's right of, 877 *et seq.*

"**STRADDLE**," meaning of term, 453 *a.*

STRANGER, cannot sue on contract, 507, 784.

action of, as determining condition, 593.

when entitled to sue on contract, 785 *et seq.*

payment by, when satisfaction, 942, 1008. (See **ACCORD AND SATISFACTION.**)

STRANGERS, rights of, when *bona fide* purchasers, 211, 291, 347, 352, 376, 733, 734. (See **THIRD PARTY.**)

SUBJECTIVE IMPOSSIBILITY, as distinguished from objective, 296.

SUBSCRIBERS TO CORPORATIONS, released by false statements of officers, 276-7.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, when conditional, 595.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO CHARITIES, mutual, consideration for, 528 *et seq.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO JOINT ENTERPRISES, effect of, 16 *a*, 528, 595.

SUBSEQUENT CONDITIONS.

Conditions subsequent divest title, but not in favor of strangers, 608.

INDEX.

SUBSEQUENT CONDITIONS—(*continued*).

burden is on party setting up devolution of property by conditions subsequent, 609.

contract may give right to rescind on breach of warranty, 610.

on contracts of "sale or return" title vests, 611.

right to determine contract of service dependent upon concrete case, 612.

indentures of apprenticeship are mutually dependent, 613.

deeds of separation between husband and wife are revoked on renewed cohabitation, 614.

forfeitures may be waived, 615.

on happening of condition subsequent title reverts, 616.

defeasible title passes to vendee, 617.

SUBSEQUENT IMPOSSIBILITY, distinctive character of, 296.

SUBSTANCE, error in, 177 *et seq.*, 188.

SUBSUMPTION OF FACTS, error as to, effect of, 199.

SUE, agreement not to, when void, 416.

effect of, 831, 1036. (See RELEASE.)

SUFFICIENCY OF CONSIDERATION, courts will not determine, 517.

SUIT, cannot be brought on illegal agreement, 340.

forbearance of, when a good consideration, 532.

on contract must be brought by party, 784.

threat of, how affecting promise, 148, 150, 532.

speculative purchase of, when void, 424.

SUNDAY, when duties maturing on, are to be performed, 897.

SUNDAY LAWS, CONTRACTS CONTRAVENING.

Sunday contracts in some states void, 382.

statutes do not affect executed contract, 383.

so as to Sunday transfer of property, 384.

when statute relates to "ordinary" calling it does not invalidate collateral contracts, 385.

indorsee without notice not bound, 386.

parties dealing *bona fide* protected, 387.

exceptions to be liberally construed, 388.

Sunday contracts cannot be ratified, 389.

date may be corrected by parol, 390.

duration of Sunday determined by statute, 391.

SUNDAY SALES, when divisible in accounts, 338.

SUPERIORITY, cannot be used to extort advantages, 159.

SUPPRESSION OF TRUTH, when equivalent to false statement, 217, 249-50.

SURETY, may avail himself by set-off of debts due his principal, 1023.

when entitled to notice, 570 *et seq.*

position of, as to appropriation of payment, 923 *et seq.*

entitled to candor from principal, 217, 254.

when may recover advances from principal, 759.

SURETYSHIP, capacity of infants for, 41.

SURPLUSAGE, does not vitiate contract, 668.

INDEX.

SURVIVORSHIP OF JOINT DEBT, when resulting, 820, 832. (See PARTIES.)

SUSPENSIVE CONDITIONS, effect of, 550.

TARIFF, agreements to invade, 445.

TAXATION, right of, by state, 1063 *et seq.*

TAXES, illegally extorted, can be recovered back, 738.

TECHNICAL TERMS, to be subordinated to read intent, 663.

TELEGRAM, contracts by, 18, 27, 1043, 1056.

liability to blunders by, 1056.

receiver of, when may sue, 791, 1056.

TELEGRAPH COMPANIES, liability of, for negligence, 1056.

TELEGRAPHIC PRIVILEGES, when the subject of monopoly, 437.

TEMPORARY IMPOSSIBILITY, nature of, 331.

TENANT, covenant of, when defeated by *casus*, 318.

where required to pay rent, 873.

may recover payments he has been compelled to make in landlord's behalf.
762.

TENANTS IN COMMON, one paying in behalf of both may recover back,
759.

TENDER.

Tender of Money in Discharge of Debt.

Distinction between tender of debt and tender of something in compliance
with contract, 970.

tender is an offer of payment in full of a debt, 971.

stops interest and costs, 972.

not admissible for unliquidated damages, 973.

may be made under protest, 974.

tender otherwise admits debt, 975.

to discharge litigated debt, money must be paid into court, 976.

conditional tender inoperative, 977.

tender must be of exact sum, 978.

to divisible debt there may be tender *pro tanto*, 979.

tender must be on precise day and in place fixed, 980.

plea of tender must set forth constant readiness to pay, 981.

tender may be made to or by agent or joint creditor or debtor, 982.

tender of money must give opportunity for inspection, though this may be
waived, 983.

tender must be in current coin, but this may be waived, 984.

objection to character of money may be waived, 985.

cheque or other security is not tender, 986.

when tender is a condition precedent, 558, 581, 606.

Distinctive Rule as to Goods.

Tender of goods must be specific, 987.

must be unconditional, 988.

INDEX.

TENDER—(*continued*).

goods must exactly correspond with description, and be merchantable by local law, 989.

if delivered at time and place fixed, this is sufficient, 990.

party fixing place should notify other party, 991.

designation required as to bulky articles, 992.

tender of goods may transfer title, 993.

may be a prerequisite to establish a duty, 994.

may be waived, 995. (See 285, 661.)

TENDER OF RESTORATION, when necessary to specific performance, 285.

TENTATIVE WRITING, effect of, 644.

TERMS OF ART, meaning of, 630.

THIRD PARTY, action of, as determining condition, 593.

when entitled to sue on contract, 785 *et seq.*

payment by, when satisfaction, 942, 1008.

right of, as *bona fide* purchaser, 211, 291, 347, 376, 733, 734.

THREATS, when constituting duress, 144 *et seq.* (See **DURESS**.)

TICKETS, presumption of knowledge of limitations in, 5, 22; see 185, 196, 572, 615.

TIME, mistake as to, may be corrected, 203.

lapse of, how affecting proposal, 9.

TIME OF ACCEPTANCE, limits as to, 15.

determines law of contract, 21.

TIME OF CONDITION, when material, 557.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE, 881 *et seq.*

money obligations without date payable on demand, 881.

reasonable time implied when none is fixed, 882.

full limit of fixed time to be allowed, 884.

promisor by disabling himself may become liable at once, 885.

"forthwith," how construed, 886.

when time is of essence, punctuality will be compelled, 887, 892.

forfeiture, when exacted, 889.

when punctuality is waived, 891.

nominal date, meaning of, 893.

how time is noted; first day excluded, 895.

"month," meaning of, 896.

Sunday, when duties maturing on, are to be performed, 897.

TIME TABLES, railroad, how far contractual, 25, 800, 1055.

TITLE, cannot be passed when not held, 292, 734, 793.

contracts of vendor for, 230.

failure of, ground to recover back price, 520, 527, 742.

when a warranty of, implied, 223 *et seq.*

when divested by condition subsequent, 608, 618.

when passing to fraudulent vendee, 291.

when transferred by tender, 993.

"TO ARRIVE," meaning of averment, 563.

INDEX.

- TORT**, money obtained by, may be recovered back, 730 *et seq.*
suit for, may be maintained for abuse of contractual relations, 812, 1043 *et seq.*
waiver of, effect of, 735.
- "TOUJOURS PRIST,"** meaning of term, 981.
- TRADE**, contracts restraining, void :—
Agreement to surrender inalienable rights is void, 430.
agreement binding party not to do business in a particular place may be sustained, 431.
no objection to such agreement that it is unlimited as to time, 432.
reasonableness of restraint is a question of law, 433.
must be valuable consideration, 434.
party may be enjoined for breach of trust, 435.
patent rights and secret processes may be sold without limitation, 436.
parties may bind themselves to deal exclusively with each other, and employee may bind himself to give his whole services to employer, 437.
agreements relieving from liability for negligence are void, 438.
limiting prices of labor void, 439.
agreement not to labor except at a certain price, or for a particular person, is invalid, 440.
and so of combination of employers, 441.
agreement to absorb a staple, or to fix prices, invalid, 442.
and so of agreement to absorb transportation, 442 *a.*
agreement to suppress bids at auction and public proposals void, 443.
- TRADES UNIONS**, agreements of, when void, 439.
- TRADING WITH ENEMY**, illegal, 473.
- TRANSPORTATION**, agreements to absorb, void, 442 *a.*
- TRAVEL, MONOPOLY OF**, 437 *et seq.*
- TRESPASS**, agreement to commit, invalid, 345.
- TROVER**, sale implied from recovery in, 7.
when suit lies, 960.
may be maintained after tender, 990, 993.
- TRUSTEE**, duty of, as to candor, 254.
unfair dealings by, invalid, 159.
cannot prefer his interests to his client's, 927.
effect of payment to or by, 948.
when suit must be brought in the name of, 799.
sale of influence void, 408.
when liable to principal in money had and received, 726.
undue influence exercised by, 161.
when one of several may receipt, 940.
- TRUSTS**, agreements to pervert, void, 408.
sale of, agreements for, void, 408.
- TRUTH**, duty of disclosing, 232, 249, 250 *et seq.*
- TURPITUDE**, no degrees in, 340-5.
- TWENTY-ONE YEARS**, limit of infancy, 29.

INDEX.

- ULTRA VIRES**, scope of term, 130 *et seq.*, 141.
- UNCERTAINTY**, when vitiating contract, 3, 627 *et seq.*
when explained by parol, 202, 661.
- UNCONSCIONABLE CONTRACTS**, equity will not execute, 166.
- "UNCORE PRIST,"** meaning of term, 980.
- UNDERVALUE**, how far inferring fraud, 518.
- UNDISCLOSED PRINCIPAL**, may sue, 802, 810.
may be sued, 811.
- UNDUE INFLUENCE**, effect of, in avoiding promise, 157 *et seq.* (See **INFLUENCE**.)
- UNILATERAL CONTRACTS**, limits of, 1, 493 *et seq.*
- UNLAWFUL AGREEMENTS**, not valid, 835 *et seq.* (See **ILLEGAL AGREEMENTS**.)
- UNLIQUIDATED DEBT**, how affected by accord and satisfaction, 1000.
(See **ACCORD AND SATISFACTION**.)
- USAGE OF TRADE**, how affecting contracts, 660.
- USE AND OCCUPATION**, implied contracts for, 708 *et seq.*
- USURY**.
Usury laws local, and to be strictly construed, 461.
between conflicting laws, that least onerous is to be applied, 462.
law of place of performance controls, 463.
mistake in fact will not avoid contract, otherwise as to mistake in law, 464.
stranger cannot avail himself of statute, 465.
contract not in itself valid not affected by subsequent usurious receptions, 466.
statute cannot be evaded by disguising or reconstructing loan, 467.
statutes do not apply to any transactions, but loans, 468.
borrower in usurious contract cannot defend without doing equity, 469.
question one of exaction, not of payment, 470.
- "VALUABLE" CONSIDERATION**, distinctive features of, 497.
- VALUE, OPINION AS TO**, when a false pretence, 259 *et seq.*
when necessary to constitute consideration, 517-8.
- VENDEES**, when affected with equities of vendor, 292, 352, 734, 793.
- VENDOR**, liability of, 212 *et seq.* (See **SALE**.)
liability for negligence, 1046.
when responsible for delivery of goods, 879.
duties of, in delivery, 911-913.
- VERACITY**, duty as to, limits of, 217, 250.
- VERBAL MISTAKES**, liability for, 1051.
- VICTIMS** of illegal scheme not barred from recovery, 353.
- VIOLENCE**, how far affecting contract, 145 *et seq.* (See **DURESS**.)
- VIS MAJOR**, when a defence to covenant, 319.
meaning of, 305, 308 *et seq.*
- VOID CONTRACTS** to be distinguished from illegal, 336.

INDEX.

- VOID SECURITIES**, payment by a nullity, 960.
price paid on may be recovered back, 744.
- "VOIDABLE,"** as distinguished from "void," 28; see 31, 55, 56, 114, 117 *a*, 382, 386.
produced by infancy, 31, 55.
by lunacy, 114 *et seq.*
by duress, 154.
- VOLUNTARY CONVEYANCES**, when fraudulent, 377.
- VOLUNTARY GIFTS**, burden of proof as to, 164.
cannot be recovered back, 496, 751.
- VOLUNTARY PAYMENT FOR ANOTHER**, 756 *et seq.* (See **MONEY PAID TO ANOTHER'S USE.**)
- VOLUNTEER**, cannot sue on contract, 507, 784-5.
- VOTES**, agreements to obtain are void, 406.
- VOTUM**, meaning of in Roman law, 493.
- WAGERS.**
Wagers on matters which ought not to be investigated are illegal, 449.
and so of wagers on matters which it is against the policy of the law to have acted on, 450.
by statute wagers are illegal, 451. .
in this country tendency is to hold all wagers illegal, 452.
when to be sued on in money had and received, 729.
a contract to purchase stocks or other chattels without intention of delivering is void, 453.
"options" not necessarily illegal, 453 *a*.
otherwise as to "corners," 453 *b*.
securities given for gaming debts void, but money paid cannot be recovered back: price of gambling material, 454.
by statute marine insurance without interest void, 455.
so of insurances of life, 456.
and so of fire insurances, 457.
contracts based on lotteries illegal, 458.
- WAGES**, implied contracts for, 707 *et seq.* (See **IMPLIED CONTRACTS.**)
- WAIVER OF CONDITION**, effect of, 604; see 312, 579, 716, 747.
- WAIVER OF PERFORMANCE** by other side, effect of, 312, 325, 603, 661.
- WAIVER OF TENDER**, effect of, 995; see 285, 661; and see **TENDER.**
- WAIVER OF TIME**, when inferred from conduct, 885 *a*.
- WAIVER OF VOIDABILITY**, proof of, 284.
- WAR**, effect of, in suspending contracts, 93, 319, 478.
suspends right to contract, 473-6.
when defeating covenant, 319.
how affecting insurance, 319, 547.
- WAREHOUSEMAN**, when an insurer, 320.
- WARRANT OF ATTORNEY**, construction of, 656.

INDEX.

WARRANTY.

- Representations to be distinguished from conditions and warranties, 212.
- there must be causal relation between misrepresentation and contract, 213.
- contract induced by honest misapprehension may be rescinded, though no action for deceit may be maintained, 214.
- expressions of opinion not representations, 215.
- misrepresentations must have been material, and must have produced the injury, 216.
- suppression of facts does not bind unless amounting to distortion of truth, 217.
- a condition negatives concurrence of minds; warranty assumes concurrence, but gives damages for misstatement, 218.
- warranty need not be in any particular words, 219.
- warranty on one point excludes general implied warranty, 220.
- supplying for particular purpose implies fitness, 221.
- selling meat for human food implies fitness, 222.
- selling by merchant implies merchantability, and by manufacturer implies that he made the goods, 223.
- defects open to inspection not warranted against, 224.
- selling by sample implies correspondence with sample, 225.
- representation may be an estoppel, 226.
- no warranty when buyer depends on his own judgment, 227.
- vendor may be liable for negligence, 228.
- sale "with all faults" excludes warranty, 229.
- warranty of title implied in sale, 230.
- to sustain such suit there must be eviction, 231.
- implication of, 909-10.
- does not cover depreciation in transit, 911.
- false, when a false pretence, 263.
- on failure of price may be recovered back, 746.

WIDOW, agreement not to marry invalid, 397.

WIFE, 76 *et seq.* (See MARRIED WOMEN.)

conveyances to defraud, when void, 399.

WILL, FREEDOM OF, how far affected by error, 174 *n.*

not incompatible with duress, 145.

WITNESS FEES, promise to pay, not binding, 500.

WORDS, error as to use of, effect of, 202.

meaning of, how settled, 627 *et seq.* (See INTERPRETATION.)

intention as to, to be effected, 657.

of art, meaning of, 630.

WORK, contract for, when defeated by *casus*, 322.

WORK AND LABOR, implied contracts for:—

Where completion of goods is prevented by accident, *quantum meruit* may lie, 714.

contracts of common carriage dependent on completion, 715.

INDEX.

WORK AND LABOR—(*continued*).

when service is broken into by employer, back wages or damages may be recovered, 716.

but not when this is act of employee, 717.

term of service dependent on circumstances, 718.

special promise to pay not to be implied in cases of friendly and family service, 719.

nor where there is a stated salary or other fixed compensation, 720. (See IMPLIED PROMISES.)

WORK DONE, implied contract for, 707 *et seq.* (See IMPLIED CONTRACT.)

WORK, EXTRA, liability for, 500, 720.

WORKMAN, when entitled to provide a substitute, 323.

WRITING, when conflicting with printed terms, effect of, 22.

how related to parol, 642, 680-4.

WRITTEN CONTRACT, absorbs unwritten negotiations, 643.

WRITTEN ENTRIES, effect of, when compared with printed, 652.

YEAR, limits of service, 716 *et seq.*

THE END

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1

2

3

4

5

6

7

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9

10

11

12

13

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